





# *Proclamation*

## *Presented*

### **In Recognition of the Doctor of Education (EdD) Program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

**WHEREAS**, the Doctor of Education (EdD) Program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has graduated its 1<sup>st</sup> Professional Practice Cohort of 28 doctoral students representing a diverse mix of administrators and teachers from the public school system, the private school sector, and the University of Hawai'i System; and

**WHEREAS**, the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa along with the Hawai'i State Department of Education and the Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools collaborated in creating a redesigned, rigorous and relevant Education Doctorate that focuses on the educational practitioner and the principles of leadership, collaborative problem solving, applied research skills and critical reflection; and

**WHEREAS**, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa EdD program "is a member of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate—a consortium of more than 80 colleges and universities committed to the redesign of the education doctorate to make it stronger and more relevant to the advanced preparation of school practitioners and clinical faculty, academic leaders and professional staff for the nation's schools and colleges and the learning organizations that support them"; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Hawai'i recognizes the commitment of the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the Hawai'i State Department of Education, and the Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools to the critical and ethical transformation of education and for meeting the needs of Hawai'i's children;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, NEIL ABERCROMBIE, Governor, and I, SHAN S. TSUTSUI, Lieutenant Governor** for the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim November 20, 2014, as

## **"DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD) DAY"**

in Hawai'i, and ask all citizens of the Aloha State to join us in recognizing the 1<sup>st</sup> Professional Practice Cohort graduates and the EdD program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for their exceptional commitment to advancing a center of practice and learning that plays an invaluable role in the future of education in the islands.

**DONE** at the State Capitol, in Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this twentieth day of November, 2014.

  
NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

  
SHAN S. TSUTSUI  
Lt. Governor, State of Hawai'i

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# Educational Perspectives

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Journal of the College of Education/University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

## CONTENTS

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### ii Contributors

- 1 **A Message from the Director of the EdD**  
*Sarah J. Twomey*
- 2 **Address on the Occasion of the State of Hawai'i's Recognition of the Doctor of Education Program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa by Governor Neil Abercrombie and Lieutenant Governor Shan S. Tsutsui, at the State Capitol Executive Chambers, Honolulu on November 20, 2014**  
*Hunter McEwan*
- 6 **Mentoring the Consultancy Project: Lessons in Collaboration and Research**  
*Daniel E. White*
- 9 **The Dissertation in Practice Experience**  
*Joshua C. Watson and Lynn T. Mochizuki*
- 12 **The EdD Cohort Experience: Students' Reflection on the Program**  
*Kyle Atabay, Erika K. Cravalho, Jocelyn Romero Demirbag, Elsa Pua Ka'ai, Alyson Kaneshiro, and Steve Nakasato*
- 19 **The EdD Consultancy Project: Social Justice Leadership Practice**  
*Sarah J. Twomey, Veselina Lambrev, Kari Leong, Jerelyn Watanabe, Gari-Vic Baxi, Ed Nob, and Camille Hampton*
- 27 **Life Long Learning is an Incredible Gift!**  
*Theresa F. Lock*
- 29 **From Mo'olelo to Mana'o: Transforming Postsecondary Support Systems for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education Students**  
*Erin N. K. Thompson*
- 36 **Taking an Institutional and Programmatic Pause to Incorporate the Value Proposition in a Mixed Evaluation Approach to Evaluating the EdD Program**  
*Sylvia Hussey and Sanjeev Sridharan*
- 42 **Artistry in Practitioner-Inquiry**  
*Hunter McEwan and Gay Garland Reed*
- 49 **Affirming the Artist Practitioner**  
*Rebecca Kapolei Kiili*
- 53 **Cleaving to Artistry: A Path in Practitioner Research**  
*Alvin Lin*
- 57 **Thoughts on Designing Research to be Pono**  
*Makalapua Alencastre*

## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Veselina Lambrev** is program manager of the EdD program at the College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and managing editor of *Educational Perspectives*. She gained her PhD from the University of Hawai'i in 2015. Her research has centered on issues of education access and equity. She has explored methods of culturally responsible construction of knowledge through research with historically marginalized communities. Her most recent works examine collaborative research within the consultancy projects of the EdD program as a process of transforming learning, researching, and leadership.

**Kari Leong** is an English Second Language teacher with the Department of Education and an adjunct professor at the Shidler College of Business, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her research and interests are centered on entrepreneurship education and leadership development. Kari has been an elementary school teacher with the Hawai'i Department of Education for 19 years. Additionally, she has been a serial entrepreneur in lifestyle businesses for two decades. Kari earned her BA degree in Journalism, Elementary Education certification, and Masters degree in Administration, Curriculum, and Instruction from Gonzaga University. Kari also completed her EdD in Professional Educational Practice from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She co-authored and published a Hawai'i bestselling book, "The Greater Good: Life Lessons from Hawai'i's Leaders" and was named SBA Small Business Journalist of the Year in 2007 for Region IX (Hawai'i, Arizona, Guam, California, and Nevada).

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**Theresa 'Terry' Lock** has worked in the field of early childhood education (ECE) for over forty years in Hawai'i, California, and Washington, D.C. She received her MA from Pacific Oaks College in California, and her EdD in professional educational practice from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE). Currently, Terry teaches early childhood education courses in UHM COE's Institute for Teacher Education program and provides technical assistance through the Pacific Regional Comprehensive Center (PRCC) to strengthen the early learning capacity in Hawai'i and Guam public schools. Prior to this, she was the first director of the Executive Office on Early Learning in the office of Governor Abercrombie; Director of Kamehameha Schools' ECE division; County of Maui's early childhood resource coordinator; a family literacy site coordinator/teacher; an instructor at UH Maui College

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**Sarah Twomey**, associate professor of language and literacy education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Curriculum studies, is the current director of the Doctor of Education in Professional Educational Practice (EdD) program. She is editor in chief of *Educational Perspectives*. Her research and publications are informed by feminist and postcolonial theory and the role of interpretative reading and writing in shaping social justice pedagogies.

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## A Message from the Director of the EdD

Welcome to this special edition highlighting one of our newest graduate programs at the College of Education. The Educational Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice (EdD) rests on the pillars of reflective practice, transformative leadership, artful pedagogy, and practitioner scholarship. I am very grateful to Dr. Hunter McEwan, emeritus and first director of the program. Dr. McEwan provided me with thoughtful mentoring and early involvement in the program. His guidance prepared me to lead with a keen understanding of educational research that is responsive to problems of practice in our educational communities. I would also like to thank Dr. Veselina Lambrev, who has been involved from the beginning of this new program and has worked tirelessly by my side in the leadership of the program and in the editing of this special edition.

It is a provocative time in higher education as the current political climate questions the role of justice and compassion in our institutional relationships. As I reflect on the pieces of work in this edition of *Educational Perspectives*, a thread throughout is the role that the EdD program has played in developing a community of practitioner scholars whose work resonates far beyond the confines of the university.

As the reader, you will encounter writings from our faculty, community mentors, graduates, and current students who live and work across diverse landscapes of education within and outside of Hawai‘i. The writings show the power of reflective leadership that embraces the “process of making things difficult, of challenging oneself and others” as a kind of educational leadership that can awaken and “take us beyond the merely mundane and routine” (McEwan and Reed, forthcoming).

I carry the vision from Dr. Hunter McEwan that the EdD program continue to foster the principles of artful pedagogy, in which beauty and creativity drive innovation and growth of the program. The EdD program is also committed to the principles of social justice and transformative leadership. Understanding leadership in Hawai‘i, I would suggest, is about giving an account of the historical present in our communities. Reconciliation with the first peoples of Hawai‘i ensures a strong future for the islands. When we become allies in the care of the ancestral knowledge and

language of Hawai‘i, we take care of each and every child of the islands. As Silva, Alencastre, Kawa‘iae‘a, and Housman (2008) state, “The language, the culture, the spiritual connection to our ancestors, and our behaviors must be a vital part of the literacy program that we provide for our children and future generations” (40).

The third cohort of the EdD program has started as this special edition of *Educational Perspectives* goes to print. Community consultancy projects and dissertations in practice that work to improve practical problems of education in our state will continue to thrive. It is an honor and privilege for me to share in the work of the brilliant current and future EdD practitioner scholars and educational leaders of Hawai‘i nei.

I believe that the principles of beauty, courage, and love can provide what is needed in a time of intense political division. Binaries of race, religion, and gender threaten to become concepts that foster hatred and fear. The EdD program is committed to fostering educational leaders who will continue to meet the challenges of education in Hawai‘i as we strive to see beyond ourselves and cultivate a sense of aloha so brilliantly described by Manulani Meyers (2003): “Developing your sense of deep spirit and enduring affections for others will be one of the most difficult things you will do in your lifetime” (14). I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the leadership of this special doctoral program and to continue to be cared for by the ‘āina and waters of Hawai‘i.



With aloha,  
Sarah Twomey

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## Address on the Occasion of the State of Hawai‘i’s Recognition of the Doctor of Education Program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa by Governor Neil Abercrombie and Lieutenant Governor Shan S. Tsutsui, at the State Capitol Executive Chambers, Honolulu on November 20, 2014

*Hunter McEwan*

### Introduction

Thank you, Governor Abercrombie and Lieutenant Governor Tsutsui, for honoring the graduates of cohort I in this very special way and for giving me the opportunity to tell you about our new doctoral degree at the College of Education (COE) at the University of Hawai‘i. I hope this short address will provide some background to what a professional practice degree is as well as acquainting you with some of the accomplishments of the very first group of graduates of our new EdD—the Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice.

We started planning for the degree in fall semester 2008, and we received Board of Regents’ approval on January 20, 2011. This may seem a long time, but as university degree approvals go it is something akin to Olympic qualifying time, especially for innovative programs like this one. What really helped to speed things along is that we had very strong support from the community—especially from Robert Witt of the Hawai‘i Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) and the Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE) Superintendent, Kathryn S. Matayoshi. Robert Witt expressed the support of both HAIS and DOE leaders in a letter to me dated July 10, 2009: “a professional practice degree program, serving practitioners from public, charter, and private/independent schools, has the potential to catalyze transformational and urgently needed improvements throughout the PK–12 academic community, and possibly inclusive of early childhood education.”

But what helped us to get this program off the ground, and what were our goals in pursuing a degree of this kind? Dean Christine Sorensen gave her strong backing to the degree and was a vital link in connecting the program planning committee with the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). She was also instrumental in securing membership of CPED in 2010 during the second phase

of their ongoing initiative to redesign doctoral preparation for educators. Graduate Division and the office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs also provided their encouragement and support in establishing an EdD that they felt would better address the needs of educators.

Our membership in CPED has been a great help in shaping aspects of the EdD. Participation in a national movement aimed at reforming doctoral education helped legitimate our design and offered frequent opportunities to attend CPED convenings. These meetings provided invaluable networking with other universities addressing similar reforms.

### Towards a Professional Practice Doctorate

Early planning for the EdD involved faculty from several departments across the COE as well as educators from public and private schools. The initial planning group included Neil Pateman from Curriculum Studies, Ellen Hoffman from Educational Technology, Jeff Moniz from the Institute for Teacher Education, Ernestine Enomoto and Stacey Roberts from Educational Administration, Marie Iding from Educational Psychology, Lysandra Cook from Special Education, Louise Pagoto of Kapiolani Community College, Steve Shiraki and Robert Campbell from the DOE, Walter Kahumoku from Kamehameha Schools, and Dan White from HAIS. Nathan Murata represented the Dean’s office and the Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Science Department. Hunter McEwan, from the Department of Educational Foundations, chaired the committee.

We held several key meetings in addition to our regular planning sessions. In January 2009, David Imig, the CPED Director, was invited to the College to tell us about developments in practitioner doctoral degrees at other universities across the nation. CPED began in 2007 as an initiative of twenty-three universities across the nation that are looking at EdD reforms along the lines advocated by Lee

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Shulman—namely that of distinguishing between doctoral research degrees and professional practice degrees. In 2010, CPED expanded its membership to include an additional twenty-four universities, including the University of Hawai'i. Dean Sorensen and I also met with the University of Hawai'i Council of Chief Academic Officers (CCAOs) to sell the idea of a new degree. As a senior group of university administrators from all UH campuses, it was essential for us to gain their approval to proceed with planning the degree. Their approval was obtained in March 2009.

We also set up some focus group meetings with aim of gathering information for a needs assessment. HAIS set up the first of these meetings at the Pacific Club on May 8, 2009, which was attended by twenty leaders from various independent schools. I provided a brief outline of the program focusing on our aim of building on group projects that engaged students in problems of practice. They were enthusiastic in their response to this approach. Other information meetings were held with the DOE district superintendents, and these meetings also served to disseminate information about the degree.

Of course, not everything went smoothly. The year 2009 was not a good one to seek approval for a new degree. Fall semester—the semester in which we hoped to obtain approval for the degree from the COE Senate—began with a university moratorium on spending and the prospect of cuts across all the departments, with attendant gloomy prognoses and furtive glances around to see who was heading for the chopping block. Not a good time to launch a new degree. In spite of the dean's insistence that it would be financed by program tuition and fees, faculty opposition was strong. However, by spring semester 2010, the fiscal situation seemed to improve and the forces that had held up the approval process began to recede. Finally, on May 14, 2010, at the very last meeting of the COE Congress for the academic year, before we all took our leave of the college for the summer, at a special meeting of the Senate, the EdD was unanimously approved with no abstentions. The delay, although frustrating, proved not to be damaging, and we were able to make quick progress on the next steps of the approval process.

During the summer, the planners got down to work on preparing the EdD proposal for a number of campus-wide reviews, beginning with the university Graduate Council. It went through that process quite speedily and was passed

unanimously by the full council in September. Next, it was on to the VCAA's office, and we were required to add some further refinements to the plan such as the budget and what fees to charge. Sheryl M. Tashima, the COE's Chief Administrative Officer, provided her expertise and was invaluable in helping to develop the program budget and get the proposal into the proper format for review.

The Mānoa Senate review was a challenge, not because they were opposed to the proposal, but because it was difficult to get a quorum. The proposal had passed muster with the Senate Curriculum Committee earlier in the semester, and the final step for faculty approval was to get it on the Mānoa Senate calendar. It would have caused a little less stress if it had passed as scheduled at the November meeting, but it was short a few members, and we had to wait until December 8, which was the last week of instruction and difficult at the best of times for faculty participation in committee matters. Fortunately, there was a decent turn out and the proposal passed, again unanimously, after a few questions from the floor. Earlier on the same day, Dean Sorensen and I attended the CCAO's meeting at College Hill and received their blessing, once Senate approval had been obtained, to proceed to the Board of Regents at their next meeting on January 20, 2011.

Confident as we were of final EdD approval, the EdD committee continued to meet, but now with the goal of actually implementing it. Our ranks were now enhanced by a number of very experienced ex-DOE administrators, including Catherine Payne, Louise Walcott, Karen Maruyama, Diane Iwaota, and Ray Sugai. The expertise of these highly respected administrators was an invaluable addition to the planning group, and the meetings were very helpful in thinking through how we might achieve lift off. Subgroups were then set up to tackle issues such as the role of the advisors, summer coursework, and the consultancy project. These groups were also of great assistance in planning details of and helping to publicize the EdD information meeting for prospective students.

The EdD was officially approved by the Board of Regents at their January 20, 2011 meeting. On January 29, we held the planned information meeting in the Architecture Auditorium. The information meeting was a sell-out, being attended by over one hundred and ten prospective doctoral students. We were now ready for applications and a plan to launch the program with our first

cohort, which would be in Fall 2011. The first semester of the program would be preceded by a brief, week-long program orientation in the summer.

We put out the word and started recruitment for cohort I in January and by April we had received over eighty complete applications. We selected a group of thirty students—anticipating some attrition over the three years of the program. However, only two people dropped out—both of them at the beginning of the program—and the other twenty-eight, to their great credit, saw the program through to graduation. Twenty-three students received their EdD in the summer of 2014 (three years after commencing their studies); the remaining five postponed completion until a later date. Since then a further three have graduated—quite an achievement and a tribute to the efforts of the EdD faculty, mentors, and students.

One of the consequences of our haste in getting the program started was that we were unaware that we required approval from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) as the EdD constituted what they referred to as a “substantive change” to existing programs. We hastily submitted a report and held our first telephone conference with the WASC team on December 5, 2011. I have to admit that we were not as prepared as we should have been at this time, and the WASC interviewers asked us to submit responses to a further set of questions. This motivated us to renewed effort and in this task we were greatly helped by Associate Dean, Beth Pateman. In fall semester 2012, we submitted a much more polished, “substantive change proposal” to WASC. On October 26, 2012, we received official approval from them. We now had a legitimate, WASC-approved doctoral degree. Their report commended the program on five points, including the quality of the report, and recommended to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Reid Dasenbroch, that it be used in future as “an exemplary strong proposal.” Our membership in CPED also met with their approval, and the consultancy project was highlighted as a commendable approach to having students “work together to solve a real problem in educational practice.”

### **What Makes the EdD a Professional Practice Degree?**

So what makes the EdD at Mānoa different from the PhD? From a design perspective PhDs are pretty

rudimentary—just a bunch of courses with a dissertation tacked on at the end. Perfectly okay, I expect, if you’re preparing researchers in academic specializations; but there is plenty of evidence to show that this approach is woefully inadequate in preparing practitioners who wish to advance their professional skills as educators. In addition, major problems arose with PhD programs once students had got beyond the obligatory coursework and were faced with the challenges of gathering together a committee of five faculty, developing a satisfactory research project and dissertation proposal, and then following through with the research. These were especially challenging tasks for full-time educators. A typical experience for people who start work enthusiastically in PhD programs is that they too often simply fade away or else cling on determinedly for years hoping to find time to do the research work required for graduation. In contrast, in the EdD, we aimed at building a challenging doctoral degree that would be professionally transformative and that could be completed in a reasonable amount of time by people who were also in full-time professional work.

So what does a professional practice degree look like? Let me answer that question under three headings: the EdD Curriculum, faculty and mentors, and cohort structure.

### **The EdD Curriculum**

An important guiding principle in our planning was that the preparation of quality educators in professional practice should take place, as far as possible, in the context of thinking and acting as leaders in the profession. Students in the EdD, therefore, complete two major problems of practice over the three years of the program. There is coursework, but this is designed to provide them with the tools (information technology and research methods, for example) to become practitioner researchers—agents of change who are equipped, both technically and methodologically, to bring about improvements in practice. The first project is a group consultancy project; the second is an individual practitioner/action research project (we call it in keeping with CPED terminology, a dissertation in practice—not just a piece of writing completed, but a piece of work implemented). At the end of the program the students present their findings at a specially arranged conference, open to the public. We held the first one at

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the East-West Center in July 2014, just a short time before holding our first EdD graduation ceremony.

The consultancy is really a service learning project that benefits the clients by providing them with data that can help them in future decision making. I might add an important point, here—it's a service provided free to the clients. But it also has the important value of being an excellent learning experience. Cohort I completed seven consultancies: one project, for example, evaluated the Character Education program in the Mililani School Complex; another interviewed graduates at Samuel M. Kamakau School to provide feedback to the staff on the strengths and weaknesses of the school's program; and another gained insights into the financial sustainability of small independent schools.

### Faculty and Mentors

We could not do this work without partnering with experts in the community. To address this need we were fortunate in obtaining the assistance of both UH faculty advisors and field mentors who teamed to support students in their project work. UH faculty were drawn from different areas of specialization in the College: Jeff Moniz (ITE); Nathan Murata (Kinesiology); Baoyan Cheng and Gay Reed (Educational Foundations); Sarah Twomey (Curriculum Studies); and Truc Nyugen (CRDG).

Our field mentors were drawn from the group of experts who had provided such valuable assistance during the planning stage, and who are all recognized leaders in either public or private schools. Catherine Payne, Louise Walcott, and Steve Shiraki drew on years of experience in the Hawai'i Department of Education; Ruth Fletcher (Punahou); Val Iwashita (Past Head of School at 'Iolani); Dan White (Head of School at Island Pacific Academy); Rod Chamberlain and Walter Kahumoku (Kamehameha Schools); and Lori Ideta (Associate Vice Chancellor of Students at Mānoa) provided key expertise and their knowledge of leadership based on years of experience at their respective institutions.

### Cohort structure

One of the great strengths of the program is the cohort model and its diverse make up. Cohort I included experienced teachers and school administrators. We had DOE faculty from Leeward, Windward, Central, and Honolulu

districts and from elementary and secondary schools, and higher education. Two students were based in Hilo and one in Maui, and thirteen out of twenty-eight students were Native Hawaiian. Bringing such a range of experience into working relationships was incredibly synergistic, and this created a high degree of critical reflection in our small group sessions. I think that one of the values of the program that really helped promote this level of collaboration and discussion is that we regarded the students, from the start, not as novice researchers, but as experienced educators. The consultancy project, for example, was based on the assumption that each of the students in a consultancy group had much to offer in the way of educational experience, practical awareness, and initiative.

I could talk about the many conference presentations made by cohort I, the publications that are coming out, but let me give two examples of student-led initiatives. One group made a trip to Aotearoa to study indigenous schools and immersion programs there. They established continuing connections with Maori educators and the EdD program at Auckland University of Technology. One of the results is a strong interest in culturally responsive approaches to education that is continuing with cohort II.

Another initiative is the partnership with Oxford Brookes University in England. The program director at Oxford Brookes noted our program online, thought it was similar to their program, and proposed that we team up and learn from each other. Six of our graduates traveled to Oxford during the early part of summer 2011 to participate in an EdD conference arranged by Oxford Brookes. They made presentations on our program and shared details of their individual EdD research projects. We are planning to reciprocate with a conference in Hawai'i. We'd like it to be focused on the relationship of practitioner research to professional development.

### In Conclusion

Cohort I has set a high standard of excellence for future cohorts, and I am happy to report that the twenty-seven students that we selected out of approximately eighty applicants to cohort II, under the direction of my colleague Sarah Twomey, are maintaining the same high standard set by Cohort I.

# Mentoring the Consultancy Project: Lessons in Collaboration and Research

*Daniel E. White*

The *consultancy project* is the first of two key projects that candidates in the EdD program are required to complete. It provides students opportunities to apply research and leadership skills to a real-world problem of practice in a collaborative venture with schools and community organizations. The goal of the consultancy is to provide clients with a set of advisory recommendations based on a doctoral level inquiry into an agreed upon problem of practice.

The idea of professional practitioners and graduate faculty collaborating to support student consultancy groups emerged at an early point in the planning of the EdD degree in Professional Educational Practices at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa. The collaboration was natural. The program founder, Professor Hunter McEwan of the Department of Educational Foundations, put together a planning committee that comprised professors, independent school leaders, and Hawai‘i Department of Education personnel. The unique combination of established leaders (community mentors) and university faculty supported a program design that embedded this kind of collaboration.

The *dissertation in practice*, the second major project in the program, also includes practitioner mentors who sit on students’ dissertation committees. The experience of the mentors for cohort I consultancies helped to refine the role for cohort II mentors.

Students in cohort I included school principals and academic division deans, teachers with some administrative duties, university and college program directors, and independent school heads. Cohort I students came from, in roughly equal proportion, public and charter schools, independent schools, universities and community colleges, and the Kamehameha Schools. A few had consulting experience already. The twenty-six cohort members were drawn from an applicant pool of nearly eighty. The ability to write well, demonstrated in several assignments in the application process, was a major factor in admission. Those

doing the selection, then, were choosing people with experience and a track record of success in communicating with others.

## The Origins of the Consultancy Requirement

The idea of requiring the consultancy as one of two major projects of the degree program gained currency when the University of Hawai‘i program director, Professor McEwan, and his colleagues attended *convenings* (a CPED term) of the Carnegie Project in the Education Doctorate (CPED), a consortium of graduate programs across the nation of which the UH program is a part. The UH EdD planning committee learned about how other CPED members used consultancy as a teaching method. The UH program planning committee had also looked at other graduate programs at UH Mānoa that focused on developing practitioners, like medicine and business, and found variations on the consultancy experience.

The planning committee expected that the consultancy projects would provide students with many learning opportunities: how to work with a team; how to help others; how to frame the question the clients really meant to ask; how to put together a meaningful review of the literature; how to collect and analyze data specific to a situation to provide clients with “value added;” and how to communicate their findings effectively.

The planning committee recognized that the students, in their professional careers, might well be in the position of hiring consultants for projects. By having the experience of engaging with a client to work on a significant problem of practice, the students would come to understand what is involved from the consultant perspective. That knowledge could prove useful to emerging institutional leaders.

The corps of mentors for cohort I included school heads and principals who had hired consultants and others who had experience as professional consultants. With their backgrounds in both public and private education, K–12 and collegiate settings, and instructional and administrative

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roles, the mentors were well-positioned to advise consultant groups regarding processes, assumptions, and understandings unique to particular segments of education. A challenge for the mentors came in an early meeting of the mentors with the program director that focused on developing rubrics for the assessments. The goal was to create consistency with the evaluation of work done in other graduate degree programs when assessing the students' literature reviews, methodologies, findings, etc.

Several of the mentors had attended CPED convenings. This proved quite helpful to the UH group as it was initiating its professional practitioner program. One bit of wisdom to emerge from a conversation at a convening at the University of Vermont alerted mentors to the notion that clients seeking the help of consultants frequently were not able to state precisely what they needed.

### **The Experiences of the Consultant Groups**

Refining the scope of the research for the consultancy project proved to be challenging. Several consultancy projects spent "their first month of meetings with clients helping the people proposing projects to figure out what they really wanted," said one of the mentors, Dr. D. Rodney Chamberlain, formerly Kamehameha Schools vice president. In a survey of advisors and mentors for students in cohort I conducted by the program chair, achieving clarity about the purposes of the consultancy was a major recommendation for cohort II. Likewise, achieving consistency in the frequency of access consultants had with clients was noted as an area for improvement.

Dr. Chamberlain, a previous EdD mentor expressed, "a few of the external groups were not happy with the results, not because of the poor quality of the projects but because of the conclusions that were not as flattering as these groups wanted." Of course, this lesson was useful for students to learn and for people hiring consultants to anticipate. Similarly, the student-consultants came to understand that the consultancy process, if it were successful, might well shatter assumptions they might have brought to the work.

The actual experience of students as consultants helped to shape the program, perhaps a bit of designing the plane while flying. Another mentor, Catherine Payne, a retired principal from the Hawai'i Department of Education and chairperson of the Hawai'i State Commission on Charter Schools noted, "The first cohort of EdD students set off

on a journey that did not have clear pathways as we worked to create an experience that would strengthen them as education leaders in Hawai'i. They helped us build a strong program and left a legacy for those in the second cohort who are moving forward on much clearer paths."

"I was touched by their resiliency and support for one another through the challenges," she continued, "and by their dedication to our important profession. The rich diversity of personal experiences and educational settings meant that these first Professional Educational Practice students are now working and making a difference for students throughout the state...and beyond. It was an honor to have been part of this experience connecting leaders to deeper thinking about the meanings inherent in the work of educators and schools."

Still another mentor, Dr. Robert Peters, retired head of Hanahauoli School, an independent JK-6 school, focused on the intended outcome for the students, noting that the consultancy "resonated with what I believe to be important in education, which encourages students and requires them to get into the real world and deal with the dynamics of that world. Much of education does not have that context and is very sterile as a result."

### **The Role of Mentors**

Cohort I mentors also noted the importance to the planning of cohort II of achieving clarity about the role of the mentor and the importance of building good relationships between the mentors and the student/consultants. The mentors noted, too, how helpful it was for a mentor to have experience in something related to the project in order to optimize his or her capacity to offer useful guidance.

Gauging the right amount of guidance that mentors should be providing was also an important area of learning in cohort I. In many instances, mentors were well-positioned to insure that consultancy groups got on the calendars of the busy clients they sought to serve, given the mentors' own professional contacts. Because the mentors were leading or had led their own institutions, they had life experience that could be tapped by students as they prepared their proposals for work to be performed or possible interpretations of specific situations. Mentors, as well as faculty advisors, proved helpful to students as they conducted literature reviews, framed research questions, and prepared for their interaction with clients.

But the work, of course, was the students' to do. As a mentor of the program, I adopted the position of "speaking when spoken to," responding to the queries of my students more than volunteering new information. So did the other mentors. This, too, added verisimilitude to the experience of the students as consultants. The students needed to determine when they needed the counsel mentors could provide. Knowing what to ask, when, and of whom had been a valuable lesson for this mentor in his career as both consultant and institutional leader and he now passed that lesson on to the students. Without question, if the consultancy experience was to be successful, conclusions and recommended courses of actions needed to be the work of the students alone, however tempting it might have been for the mentor to offer advice.

Advisors and mentors grappled with other decisions for cohort I that would optimize the learning experience for the students. Again, the experience of other CPED schools was helpful, but it was also clear that each CPED program had made its own set of decisions. For example, mentors set the number of students to be engaged as a team of consultants. The size of group varied from three to five in cohort I; three seemed too few and five was too many for some of the projects. In cohort I, advisors and the program chair assigned students to consultancy groups with some degree of student agency. For cohort II, all students were able to participate in their first choice of consultancy group.

Another critical question was what graduate coursework would make sense to occur before or coincident with the consultancy project. Methods classes? Statistics/data analysis? Leadership workshops? The experience of cohort I has informed the decisions for cohort II on these questions.

There were four objectives identified in the rubric for assessment of consultancy projects developed by the faculty and mentors:

1. working collaboratively to solve problems and implement plans of actions,
2. applying research to bring about improvements in practice,
3. reflecting critically and ethically on matters of educational importance, and
4. developing a broad interdisciplinary perspective on the project.

Mentors were involved in assessing each of these areas, first independently, and then in concert with the UH faculty advisor. Generally speaking, the performance of the students was first-rate.

Student response to the work of the mentors was positive as well. The depth and breadth of mentor experience proved helpful to many consultancy groups, both in terms of the subject matter of the project and in developing a sense of the 'lay of the land' for various clients. Students noted that the experience of conducting a literature review for the consultancy, with mentors available to offer guidance, was helpful when they approached the literature review for their dissertations in practice.

### Looking Forward

A welcome benefit of the experience of cohort I has been the availability of some graduates to serve cohort II as mentors. They have been involved since the beginning of the consultancy process for cohort II, offering feedback regarding proposals from consultancy clients, and advising regarding the process by which cohort II students selected the consultancies they were to undertake. This group of experienced cohort I participants has provided a perspective on the consultancy process that helped to refine what was already a good program and make it into a better one.

Several cohort I mentors continued to work with the students as mentors for their dissertations in practice. In this research and writing process the students noted the benefit to having someone who had been through a related professional experience as a voice in the guidance of the dissertation. All of the mentors for cohort II consultancies have remained involved in dissertation committees related to their respective fields of practice. Once more, the virtue of weaving together expertise and experience in support of student learning proved valuable.

Learning by doing is hardly a new philosophy of education. Neither are the ideas of apprenticeship or tutorials novel. The inclusion of professional practitioners as part of the instructional team for doctoral students engaged in a professional practitioner degree program taps into these time-tested ways of teaching and learning to produce a learning experience for the students possibly like none other they have encountered. The success of program graduates will prove the ultimate measure.

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# The Dissertation in Practice Experience

*Joshua C. Watson and Lynn T. Mochizuki*

## **University of Hawai‘i Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice (EdD)**

In the fall of 2011, the University of Hawai‘i College of Education initiated its Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice (EdD) program with the first cohort of thirty students. These students, representing diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, began a three-year voyage of coursework and collaborative inquiry in applying research in practice. The program design included rigorous coursework and two major projects focused on the resolution of specific problems of practice. The first, a consultancy project, aimed at working with clients in the local community to utilize the application of research in solving problems arising from the educational practice of clients. The program culminated with each student conducting an independent research study of their choice and publishing their findings in a dissertation. The EdD program distinguishes itself from the PhD program in that it provides an opportunity for students to explore a problem of practice and allows practical applications of the findings in the dissertation. The two authors of this chapter are graduates of the first cohort of the EdD program (2011–2014) and share their perspectives on the dissertation experience.

## **Making Meaning of School closure - Joshua C. Watson**

### *Dissertation Summary*

Although it is a rare occurrence, independent schools do close occasionally. When this happens, the people in the school may find themselves at a loss as to how to make sense of it all. This dissertation examined the effect that school closure had on the employees of an independent school in the state of Hawai‘i; it was written during the last year of operation and after the closure of the school where the author was employed. Through an investigation of the literature, records of the participant-researcher’s own experience, and a series of interviews with school employees who experienced closure or near-closure, this

study addressed the research question, “How do school employees personally experience the closure of their employing school?”

### *Reflections on the Dissertation Process*

Given that the dissertation is an invention of nineteenth century Europe, with roots that stretch even further back in the historical tradition of scholarship, one might wonder whether it even has a place in a modern day graduate program. This may be particularly true when one considers that the field of education emerged somewhat later as a separate and distinct academic discipline, a goal of inquiry in itself, rather than only the method of transmission of knowledge from other disciplines. Yet, even now in the twenty-first century, on the other side of the planet, in a field previously undefined, the dissertation is a crucial ligament binding together the threads of scholarship, reflection, and practice that any graduate program in education seeks to strengthen. Indeed, in producing my own dissertation, I observed that my life began to resemble what I had imagined as the ascetic, even monastic, flavor of the life of a budding European scholar from hundreds of years ago. Whether carefully hand writing page after page by candlelight surrounded by stacks of books and notes, or carefully composing a single sentence at a time by the light of a laptop (although still surrounded by stacks of books and notes), the dissertation process channels one’s scholarly insights and anneals one’s intellectual personality into a disciplined, organized, and therefore meaningful, format.

As a student in the first-ever EdD program offered by the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, I spent three years learning more deeply about, and reflecting on, the profession of education as practiced by myself and others. The capstone of this sequence was the writing of a dissertation, a first foray into the production of serious scholarly work. I chose as my topic the closing of an independent school, and as it happened, the data I needed for my research were everywhere around me—I was living through exactly that scenario. Thus, my research was

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not abstract or theoretical; it was a real examination of the lived experience of educators. For me, it served as a fitting culmination to a program aimed at producing a generation of reflective practitioners in education; a program that deliberately eschews ivory tower academia in favor of developing the practice of those who actually do the work.

Our program was academically rigorous. Indeed, I was challenged to stretch my understanding in every cohort class meeting. In the process of researching and writing a dissertation, I was stuck, stymied, stalled, and ultimately spurred to growth in a way that can only occur when presenting an intellectually serious argument through clear writing. Make no mistake, it was difficult. But it was meant to be difficult. In many ways, writing a dissertation is the ultimate reflective practice. In so doing, I evolved as a reflective practitioner in ways I could not have foreseen at the outset of the program. Thus, I was able to make my own small contribution to a tradition that stretches around the world and across the centuries.

### **Key Factors Attributing to the Development of Successful Women Leaders in the Hawai'i Department of Education - Lynn T. Mochizuki**

#### ***Dissertation Summary***

Although more women are now in leadership positions in Hawai'i, the number of women in leadership roles does not equally represent the percentage of women in the teacher population. The data on women in leadership is sparse and inconsistently collected in general, but especially in Hawai'i. In addition, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) provides various tables that have varying data reported in previous and subsequent years (USDE and NCES 2004, 2008). The problem is not easily identified or acknowledged without a formal and consistent data reporting system. As a result, there are few programs or research in Hawai'i addressing the development of leadership in women. My research involved a qualitative case study of five women leaders who work or have previously worked in administrative positions in the Hawai'i State Department of Education. Through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups, my study explored factors that influenced the development of women leaders in Hawai'i and empowered them to enter into leadership positions.

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#### ***Unexpected Impact***

I began my dissertation journey by stumbling through the initial stages of deciding upon what to study. What did I want to study that could sustain my interest throughout the life of the EdD program? Incredulously I also wondered, what contribution could I possibly add to the existing body of knowledge by well-established researchers? How could I, as a mere doctoral candidate, make an impact in any way?

Little did I realize how much could happen in such a short amount of time. Although there were definite moments of anxiety and stress that naturally come with writing a dissertation, the collective moments of the EdD journey would unfold in a way that transformed my frame of reference. It changed the way I saw the world, in the way I made meaning of my experiences, and ultimately, in the way I saw myself. While focusing on what I could honestly contribute to the existing knowledge, little did I realize how my study would profoundly transform myself.

I was extremely fortunate to be able to study five amazing women leaders who took time out of their busy lives to share with me their leadership journeys. All of the women shared with me intimate stories of their life that helped shape their development into a leader. It is an understatement to say that it was an honor and a privilege to be able to hear their stories and insights of how they developed and became well-established and respected leaders. As I engulfed myself in the data of interview transcriptions, I began to realize how the beginnings of their journeys were similar to one another, and surprisingly, similar to my own.

When I started the EdD program, I did not see myself as a leader, and I marveled at my colleagues who were well-established leaders as principals and heads of schools. I felt out of place, often wondering how I had been admitted into the program and whether I should really be in the program. Then, as I sifted through the transcripts filled with stories of these women who began their leadership journeys not feeling or seeing themselves as leaders, I began to identify with them. And as I continued to immerse myself in the data—while coding and analyzing all of it—I began to internalize the lessons they learned.

At the time, I did not realize what was happening. When writing a dissertation, there is very little you notice outside of your study. In hindsight, however, I can see how, incrementally, I began to change the view of myself, gain

courage through the women's stories, and change how I see my impact as a leader. It felt as if I lived through all of their experiences and developed into a leader as they shared their journeys. As I wrote in my dissertation:

In discussing the findings and implications of this study, I could not help but reflect on the impact of this research on my personal growth as a future woman leader. Conducting this research provided me with an outside perspective when listening to their stories and traveling with them as they reminisced about their leadership journeys. Unconsciously, however, I also held an insider perspective as I internalized the lessons from their experiences and gained more confidence with each story they shared. Upon reflection, I realized that I began to identify with these women leaders. I was surprised that they shared my sentiments about leadership—that they did not see themselves as leaders in the beginning, and they lacked confidence in their abilities. Perhaps it was that echoing of my personal fears that created a connection to these women leaders and I began to grow along with their stories. (Mochizuki 2014, 149–150)

Writing a dissertation is a daunting and rigorous process that stretches you beyond what you thought possible. If you love what you study, it becomes a passion that sustains you through the stringent requirements. And, as dubious as this may sound, there is a part of you that will miss it after the completion of your project. All of the work and time spent tirelessly putting it together creates a fierce sense of ownership and pride when you finally complete it. In some ways the saying “Ignorance is bliss” is true. You cannot help but be transformed by the dissertation process itself—it changes the way you see the world and forces you to realize that with that understanding comes the responsibility of doing something about it.

## Closing

Though the two authors pose different perspectives on their dissertation experience, both views provide a glimpse into the process of writing a dissertation in practice. The experience provided an opportunity for reflective inquiry with impacts that resonated on professional and personal levels.

For Lynn, the dissertation experience transformed the way she viewed herself as a leader. As she reflected in the final chapter of her dissertation:

As mentioned before, my own story resonated with the beginning stories of the women leaders. Unconsciously, I began to hear and trust my own voice in making decisions or taking initiatives for things I believed to be right. Outwardly, my actions showed a larger confidence in taking the lead and advocating for the benefit of the educational system. By identifying with the women leaders, I began to see the possibility of one day becoming a woman leader. It was a thought I had fleetingly dismissed before, but now could see it as a viable option. With the right people around to offer guidance and encouragement and the right experiences and opportunities to grow and evolve, leadership is now a part of my future. (Mochizuki 2014, 150–151)

Even after graduates receive their doctoral degrees, the EdD dissertation in practice continues to impact the everyday life of its newly transformed leaders. The way in which they see and navigate the world around them is forever changed. The manner in which they interpret, process, and address problems-in-practice becomes the new norm as they apply the knowledge and skills gained through the experience. The dissertation process is meant to be difficult in order to allow individuals to explore and grow beyond what they ever thought possible. It is the beauty of the experience that creates transformational changes in the individuals who persevere through it.

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# The EdD Cohort Experience: Students' Reflection on the Program

*Kyle Atabay, Erika K. Cravalho, Jocelyn Romero Demirbag, Elsa Pua Ka'ai, Alyson Kaneshiro, and Steve Nakasato*

## Introduction

Presented as a collection of short essays, the authors of this chapter reflect on their experience in the UH Mānoa EdD program and the questions, “What have you been able to take away from the experience?” and “What are you doing now that the EdD made possible?” The authors entered the program with a wealth of experience in education at all levels in public and independent institutions. They characterize the program as empowering, validating, transformative, and part of a journey of continuous professional development. Connections with other educational professionals, leaders, and change-makers is a hallmark of the EdD program; in these cases, those connections continue to be powerful elements of the authors' lives. During and after the program (2011–2014), most experienced changes in their jobs—some in locus of employment, some in place of residence. All have experienced positive growth, which they attribute to the EdD program; these impacts continue to resonate in their lives and the lives of others.

## Writing as a Reflective Practitioner

*Jocelyn Romero Demirbag*

By the time I was in the second and third grade, I was an avid reader, and my dream was to become a writer; I wanted to be a novelist as that was the only kind of writing I knew then. But after a couple of scarring experiences with sharing my childish writing, I put that dream aside as I grew up. The fact that I now spend much of my weekends writing is a pleasant surprise. I received this gift as a result of the EdD process.

In April 2014, I learned about a call for book chapters to be published in Stead's volume “The Education doctorate (EdD): Issues of access, diversity, social Justice, and community Leadership.” The proposal touted “. . . a belief in the power of the EdD to prepare highly competent

scholars for civic engagement” (personal communication, April 2014). The call inspired me to write about the power of values-based research, practitioner-based research, and the importance of giving voice to a community, all of which I had addressed in my newly completed EdD dissertation (Demirbag 2014, 2015a). Several articles later, I wrote “Gifts of the doctoral process” and concluded:

I am continually amazed that my path ‘accidentally’ brought me to an action research-based dissertation; I never expected to continue moving ahead as a researcher within my professional practice and outside the university setting. Validation, confidence, empowerment, informed action, as well as the generation and sharing of my living-educational theory—these are the gifts of the doctoral process. (Demirbag 2015b, 74)

Through the process of completing the EdD, I engaged in “reflective practice,” which continues to serve me and my school today. I find myself participating in a constant dialogue between myself, my practice, and my co-workers' responses; we are a perpetual triangle of discussion and growth that evolves all of us and ultimately leads to student impact. And, “As often happens when you engage earnestly with a question, articles, books, and conversations followed” (Schaefer manuscripts, 2017, 1). The EdD retrained my thinking so that after 43 years of squelching my writing aspirations, I can now say that I am a writer.

The EdD also taught me that I can also say I am a practitioner. Through the EdD, I found that I resonated with Schön's descriptions of “reflection-in-action” and “reflective conversations” (1983). The confidence I gained through accepting myself as a practitioner allowed me to dare to write and speak aloud my “living-educational-theories” (McNiff and Whitehead 2010). I took to heart their words:

You can create your own personal theory about any aspect of your work, regardless of where that work is located. This theory is a part of you. Because you are a living person, you are changing every day; and because you are reflecting consciously on what you are doing, and making adjustments as you go, your theory is also developing with you. Your theory is part of your thinking and living, which is continually transforming. So your theory, as part of your own thinking, is living. (252)

I began to consciously explore, test, and apply the theories I had developed over the years prior to the EdD but had never thought of as living theories. In particular, I began to explore one paragraph from my dissertation that persistently called to me:

An important and esoteric side note here is that some believe that behind this mission stands an angel, a spirit (“school spirit”), a being, or even what Hawaiians call an *‘aumakua*. Pali Jae Lee (2007) defined *‘aumakua* as “guardian, spirit of the family, source” (113). She further explained that the *‘aumakua* “is the essence...the sum total of all who have gone before, from the last to the first. It is the beginning of all things . . . every halau (school) had its own *‘aumakua* to watch over it” (113). Waldorf schools hold the belief that there was a being or spirit at its core. (Demirbag 2014, 134)

I developed an explorative workshop with two other friends to examine the being at the core of Waldorf schools and its relationship to the concept of *‘aumakua*. We used sitting meditation, walking meditation, art, hula, interviews, and chanting to see if we could approach this being. This exploration became “Spirit of My Place on Earth: Connecting with the Being of a Hawaiian Waldorf School” (Demirbag 2016).

Writing that article inspired me to introduce the idea of connecting teaching and learning to place at the opening meetings of the next school year. We learned how to make a variety of lei, we held a service project at a rare natural spring in the area, and we discussed how our curriculum might reflect the significance of our location. This led to the faculty’s further interest in discussing our location and its relevance to curriculum and we decided to bring in Neil Boland from New Zealand who could address this topic at our statewide Waldorf conference. Neil challenged us to audit our curriculum specifically for place, time, and

community, and we soon accepted that challenge. We agreed that Neil would come to Hawai‘i again for our next year’s opening meetings to run the audit. To prepare for it, we answered a series of questions developed by Neil and me two months after the conference as well as four months after the conference. And upon concluding the audit, Neil and I decided to write a number of articles describing the process our school had gone through.

Through the reflective practice I developed as an EdD student, I stumbled onto the research niche of spiritual geography. More importantly, my dialogue with self extended to include my practice and my colleagues, setting our school on a path of re-evaluating our curriculum. This will improve our teaching and bring relevance to our students’ learning experience.

To contribute to improving, a social situation therefore means first engaging with one’s own learning, and then bringing that learning into a social situation. This means talking with people, and showing your awareness of your own learning and how you might influence them. (McNiff and Whitehead 2010, 251)

I am excited about the possibility that my dream of writing can lead to improvement for others, a dream that materialized through the EdD journey.

## **The EdD Cohort Experience** *Steve Nakasato*

I entered the EdD cohort program as an experienced and hard-working educator. After twenty-seven years as a teacher and school administrator (sixteen as a principal), I did not imagine that another degree would change my professional pathway, however there were pieces of the program that were particularly appealing even for an “old dog” like myself. In addition to earning a degree in three years, in Hawai‘i, I was genuinely excited about making a difference by researching among a prominent collection of local practitioners. Albeit retirement was in my distant forecast, being awarded a doctorate gowned in academic regalia and hooded with a “puffy hat” was unimagatively alluring.

At the beginning of the cohort journey, I remember asking myself if I truly fit into the requisites of the program. Even after being indoctrinated about PhD

and EdD programs, I had to grasp that the University of Hawai'i EdD was evolving, inimitable, and resolutely pragmatic. I was definitely anxious about ostensible voids of predetermined learning outcomes and compliance, but I deeply believed in the program's philosophical commitment to people and systems learning through hands-on experiences. I also agreed that there were no simple answers for complex problems, but an array of adaptive approaches, and therefore it was evident that the Hawai'i EdD and I not only "fit," but we entirely amalgamated.

Throughout the three-year cohort journey, I thoroughly enjoyed every opportunity to dialogue and learn among my colleagues while laughing at each other's circumstantial campus craziness. However the most important schooling that I attained throughout the cohort journey was becoming cognizant of context and its ubiquitous effect on everything. Throughout my career, I have been surrounded by context, but I did not appreciate and learn from it. As a principal, I was trained to forge vision, construct professional development, and organize systems, but not to lead a school from the heart of the organization where context continuously circulated.

When asked, *what have I been able to take away from the EdD cohort experience*, I have summarized my thoughts into new learnings. My first new learning was that I became a problem finder. Prior to the cohort, I relied on antiquated practices of problem solving in solitude, but the cohort retooled me with skills to incorporate stakeholder contexts that have opened collaborative discussions of understanding prior to rushing into hasty solutions that never addressed the origin of the problem.

Another new learning that I developed was becoming an equitable principal. I was formerly adept about implementing equality, but doing so caused unintended exclusionary decisions instituted by aligning disparate needs with equally divided resources. By valuing equity, I have become mindful of the array of contexts and broaden my work to serve panoramic student populations who have not received fair supports or simply been overlooked because of other acquiescence urgencies.

The third new learning that I have gained was becoming trustful of educators beyond the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE). Despite being landlocked in public education for three decades, I found the program's connection to leaders from higher education, private and

independent schools, and cultural-based and public charter schools to be inconceivably valuable. In addition to exposing me to innovative ideas beyond my paradigms, my cohort colleagues taught me to open my world of thinkers and to collaborate on the most challenging school complexities founded on circumstance and compassion.

Now that a few years have passed since commencement services, I have been questioned, *what am I doing now that the EdD made possible?* Interestingly, my "new" learnings have resolved into staunch leadership outcomes. The first leadership outcome was that the EdD transformed me from a problem finding principal to a leader with an affirmed sense of purpose. Beyond helping me intently understand problems, the EdD has transformed my learnings into actions entrenched in a vision not misdirected by static and irrelevant scores. In place of codified values, the EdD has mapped my professional purpose, rooting it in improvement sciences, nurturing relationships, cultivating collective knowledge, fostering site-based leadership, and promoting efficacious accountability.

The next leadership outcome that the EdD is currently advancing is updating me from an equitable principal of resources, to becoming a research-based principal who is attentive to co-developing resources through partnerships. The EdD has led me to study researcher and practitioner partnerships that co-designing innovative provisions of equity. Being cognizant of previous unfulfilled relationships between researchers and practitioners, I am learning how to kindle partnerships where practitioners comprehend research because they help to develop it and researchers study context because they value it.

The third leadership outcome that the EdD made possible has been to open my professional community, from the University of Hawai'i EdD program to state and national educational policy leaders. Soon after the EdD commencement services, I transferred from a directorship in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, to a principalship at Pearl Ridge Elementary. A couple of years later, I shifted again to become a Principal in Residence at the Professional Development Educational Research Institute, revealing that I have changed jobs almost yearly since graduating. As a testament to the EdD, my continuous redirection of my professional journey has been preset by my original intent of applying the UH Cohort where I wanted to make a difference by researching among a prominent

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collection of practitioners. As a result of my “new learnings and leadership outcomes,” accentuated with a Doctorate of Education, I have been fortuitously invited to support organizations such as the Educational Institute of Hawai‘i and Governor Ige’s ESSA Blueprint Team. And as of recent, I was additionally privileged to work with past HIDOE superintendent Paul LeMahieu and national leaders to collaborate on Research Practice Partnerships—a trail that will undoubtedly lead me to another professional pathway.

In conclusion, the EdD has been much more than an unimaginatively alluring degree because it has entirely transformed my capacity to understand context and to work within complexity while granting me trusted relationships that I will cherish forever. Most meaningful, I believe that the University of Hawai‘i EdD program has irrefutably freed a cohort of exemplary practitioners who are actively engaging in research and collectively improving institutional practices and processes that will surely innovate significant educational advancements for all children.

### **Inquiry, Connection, and Change: A Reflection on the Transformative EdD Experience**

*Alyson Kaneshiro*

Life is full of questions—questions that drive our inquiry, reflection, and decisions. What would your dream job be in five years? How am I an educational leader? How will I connect educational theory to practice? What are my “gots” and “growth edges”? Where should I go to grow and who can I trust to guide me there? These are the questions I grappled with immediately before, during, and after my time in the EdD program. In this article, I will reflect on how the intentional design of the EdD program cultivated my ability to answer these important questions; answers that created huge shifts in my thinking and enabled me to pursue career opportunities that have elevated my professional growth far beyond what I expected.

During a faculty inclusion activity in 2011, I was paired with our school’s curriculum coordinator and she asked, “What would your dream job be in five years?” At the time, I was working as a student services coordinator overseeing the special education compliance process at our elementary school. “I would like to be a professor of literacy in a college of education,” I responded without hesitation. “You know, there’s a new doctoral program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I have a flyer for it. I’ll send it to you.”

Needless to say, I went to the informational meeting advertised on the flyer and by the following summer I was accepted as a candidate in the EdD program. I was one of thirty candidates accepted to the program in the summer of 2011. Our first semester in the fall was packed with coursework in educational technology, statistics, and educational leadership. All of us maintained full-time jobs while taking these classes and we all worked hard to keep pace with our assignments despite daily workplace and personal demands.

Fortunately, the EdD attracted professors and educational leaders who were skilled in creating a trustworthy space, where we could connect around our shared struggles and speak candidly about confronting our institutional challenges and problems of practice we wanted to solve. In the EdD space, I felt like my voice was heard and valued. This grew my confidence over time. Initially, I had a very difficult time seeing myself as an educational leader. The assignment that gave me the most trouble was writing my educational leadership philosophy. I ended up turning in a vague smattering of leadership buzzwords and weak examples that did not sound like me or reflect a cohesive educational leadership philosophy at all. This was the first piece of many pieces of writing that would be gently rejected by my professor because of my inability to speak my voice in my writing; my professor who later became my dissertation advisor and mentor that was instrumental in helping me discover my voice and embrace leadership by our journey’s end.

By the time I was ready to develop my research proposal, I was midway through the program. The easy part was selecting an action research methodology. This methodology matched my desire to find out how teachers developed classroom interventions and viewed our school’s implementation process of intervention systems. The difficult part was creating a research plan that was structured clearly enough to uphold the tenets of the Institutional Review Board, yet open ended enough to allow teachers to be creative and willing to share their voices authentically during the research process. Ultimately, I wanted my dissertation to illustrate how collaborative action research with teachers could connect theory (what researchers suggest teachers do) to practice (what teachers can realistically accomplish in their classroom contexts) in authentic and meaningful ways. My university professors and classmates

with implementation experience took on the role of mentors by helping me navigate the research design and implementation process from start to finish. Through this experience, I developed strong working relationships with many members of the EdD cohort who later played pivotal roles in supporting my career changes after graduation.

Post graduation in 2014, I began feverishly applying to new positions in my organization. I was confident that I was fully prepared to move beyond the school level to district or state level positions. I applied to two special education positions at the district level and one at the state level. The state level position was responsible for facilitating the implementation of intervention systems statewide; exactly what I had been studying and conducting action research on for an entire year. I was thrilled and excited for the opportunity to scale up my work in the system I had devoted my entire career to improving.

In preparation for the interview process, I concentrated on identifying my “gots” and “growth edges” post EdD. Alison Park of Blink Consulting introduced me to these terms during a Leaders of Color Conference in San Francisco. She described “gots” as an education toolkit that includes knowledge, understandings, skills, habits, and strategies. Jennifer Garvey Berger (2004) describes growth edges in terms of people’s thinking and sensemaking, and suggests that it is the threshold of transformation or the edge of understanding. By completing the EdD program, I added leadership experience, research skills, systems implementation, and collaborative decision-making to my “gots” toolkit. The EdD pushed the boundaries of my growth edges by connecting me with mentors who accompanied me to my edges and supported me to find my way to new understandings.

So, after completing three interviews and many long conversations with my mentors, I was disheartened when I was issued the third and final rejection letter. Once I realized the career opportunities in the Hawai‘i Department of Education were inaccessible, I made the decision to turn my attention away from Hawai‘i to universities and educational systems on the continental west coast. After submitting over thirty applications to educational institutions in Washington State, California, and Oregon, I found my place in California. Late summer 2015, the University of San Francisco (USF) decided to hire me as an adjunct professor in their special education department to teach a course on data-based decision-making in reading. Coincidentally around

the same time, my classmate from the EdD program, Dr. Mike Walker, began a new chapter in his career as a Head of School at San Francisco Day School, an independent K–8 institution, where he connected me to a maternity leave position as a sixth-grade learning specialist. I am currently working at both institutions and feel certain that the new pathway into independent schools was the right choice to fulfill my desire for continued inquiry, growth, and change.

Although I am in a completely different place than I expected to be, I still remain connected to the people from the EdD program who continue to advance and support my growth as a professional educator. For me, the most significant takeaway from the EdD program is the connection I made to other educators who have been willing to accompany me to my growth edges, helping me find the courage I needed to transform challenges into opportunity. After this journey of inquiry, connection, and change, the only question I have now to ponder is, “So what’s next?”

### **The Map to Radical Transformation: Reflecting on the EdD as a Team**

*Kyle Atabay, Erika K. Cravalho, and Elsa Pua Ka‘ai*

The Education Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice gave us the map to lead change in our institution that in many respects was more radical than just innovative. It is through the EdD program that we were able to move buildings, thoughts, and individuals toward a culture that begs constant dialogue and questions around how to best serve our indigenous students.

Our research grew out of a collaborative idea that specific questions needed to be answered when designing and building innovative learning environments and programs for indigenous Hawaiian learners. Teacher collaboration was inherent to that design process and thought, and would prevail long after the physical building was completed. Clearly, the research would be the avenue through which we would both test the work we were doing and also support and confirm theories surrounding a new program and physical space. We reflect here on three research studies that inform how the culture of our school has developed a program and a direction that provides a frame for our work going forward.

The first study is an investigation into teacher collaboration—an exploration into the extent to which collaboration exists in the school. The intent to focus on

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collaboration was to inform the architectural design of the new facility and to enlighten the instructional design and delivery in the new teaching and learning space. The action research process enriched the administrators' journey of leading the building and design process, and influenced the culture of a school. What began six years ago has grown to become the focal point of programmatic direction, teacher and team collaboration, and physical changes to the teaching and learning spaces. Further, the investigation into the impact of collaboration on innovative learning environments has influenced campus-wide discussions around the interrelationships between "brick and mortar" and program growth and development. In retrospect it is clear that a building would have been built to replace the old one whether or not the desire to do the research were present. More importantly, though, the culture of the school in terms of teacher collaboration may not have flourished, or even been considered important, had we not set about to intently research through doctoral studies the extent of collaboration amongst our teachers. To date, on-going theoretical and programmatic movement toward improving team collaboration in a wall-less environment enhances instructional delivery and the quality of program.

Teams are an integral part of any organization, and a team's ability to learn and adapt to their environment and others is key to an organization's success. In the second study, we examined synergy within a teacher leader group to gain their perspective and discover the experiences that foster synergy within the group. Synergy is referred to as multiple characteristics of a group, that when combined, create a greater effect than the sum of their individual effects in this study. This group of teacher leaders created an environment based on interdependence, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability to building the collective capacity of the entire staff. Three characteristics of synergy—environment, people, and passion—emerged in this study. We are convinced that when working with a team, synergy is necessary in order for the team to surpass what they could do on their own. It is a necessity for organizations to create an environment where teams work in synergy to foster improvement and innovation. A fundamental challenge in a school environment is to improve professional practice and the focus on capacity promotes the idea that there is no one way of learning. When people work in a synergistic state as a team, it evokes a feeling that connects

them to individuals' passions and personal interests. As an organization, we continue to shift from teams put together to cooperate in order to meet organizational goals to dynamic teams created through coordinated and collaborative structures that are constantly shifting to meet the needs of an ever-changing school environment. This has required our teachers to be innovators and problem solvers, motivating them to engage in affecting the growth and improvement of student learning. Having the characteristics of high levels of trust and respect, shared commitment to a clear and common purpose, willingness and ability to manage conflict, focus on measurable results, and mutual responsibility and accountability for outcomes have been the heart of our success and continued growth to support students and their voice in the learning process.

The third study sought to capture student voice via inquiry into our students' experience in an open-space learning environment on the dimensions of learning and social interaction. More importantly, it was found that this type of learning environment corresponds with and supports adolescent needs. As we reflect upon the journey since the research, student voice continues to remain at the core of programmatic directions, decision making, and curricular change. As this is an ongoing process, our work today focuses on establishing best practice for the use of our learning environment. We are fortunate that the flexibility of our learning spaces allows us countless opportunities to explore and innovate.

Our research is a statement of appreciation for the chance in our career for a group of educators to design and build a learning facility that echoes the needs of indigenous middle school students in a future century learning environment. The direction of this research and that which teachers and staff collaborated upon has forever changed how we do work in our school. Groups from our state public and independent education systems have come to dialogue about innovative learning environments and, in a few cases, we have helped to influence the design of others' buildings and programs. We have been recognized nationally and internationally through research conferences as well as through word of mouth visits by colleagues with shared passions for indigenous education in innovative environments. This recognition of our work demonstrates our commitment to constant improvement of program and pedagogy and it exemplifies the interest in our work by other indigenous

people from around the world. The Education Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice gave us the map to lead change that in many respects was more radical than just innovative.

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# The EdD Consultancy Project: Social Justice Leadership Practice

*Sarah J. Twomey, Veselina Lambrev, Kari Leong, Jerelyn Watanabe,  
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## University of Hawai‘i Education Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice

The College of Education is located at the system’s flagship campus, the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. This is an urban campus that serves many commuter students on the island of O‘ahu in the capital city of Honolulu. The design of the EdD program is based on the framework of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate. Of particular importance is a focus on education leaders becoming practitioner scholars in order to bring about change that improves the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

The University of Hawai‘i Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice (EdD) was developed by UH Mānoa College of Education faculty and educators in both independent and public schools in Hawai‘i, with the first cohort started in August 2011. The program runs on a three-year cycle for each cohort of approximately 25 people. The second cohort entered their final year in September 2016. As this chapter was being written, the members of the third cohort are being selected to enter the program in summer 2017. Doctoral students are chosen based on their skills as leaders in a variety of educational settings—pre-schools, K–12 public and independent schools, community colleges, and the two other University of Hawai‘i campuses on West O‘ahu and on Hawai‘i Island. The twenty-five members of cohort II live on three different islands and are school and program administrators, teachers, counselors, and consultants. Many work closely with Native Hawaiian communities across the state.

In 2015, five years after the launch of the program, the authors of this chapter—three faculty members and five doctoral candidates—developed a research study exploring the impact of the program’s group consultancy project on student and client learning. Our interest was sparked by comments often made by students, clients, and faculty in the regular course evaluations conducted for the project.

Final reports and oral presentations upon completion of the studies also emphasized the consultancy project’s value in positively influencing learning and leadership practice, which prompted us to evaluate its impact further.

The group consultancy is one of two key project outcomes in our program and, as such, is an opportunity for cohort members to bring their experience, research skills, and analytical ability together to serve the larger educational community. In this project, students are organized into consultancy teams to explore problems of practice submitted by external state agencies such as school districts, independent schools, post-secondary institutions, and philanthropic organizations. The submissions, arising from “Requests for Assistance” (RFAs), are screened for applicability, and a final set is prepared for the “consultancy” teams. Each student group provides a contextual analysis of their assigned problem, researches the problem, conducts data analysis (financial, operational, evaluative, and demographic, as the case requires), delivers program recommendations, considers ethical implications, and offers strategies or recommendations for implementation in a final written report that is submitted to the outside agency. Between 2011 and 2016, groups from cohorts I and II completed twelve consultancy projects that served public K–12 schools, public K–12 charter schools, independent schools, and community groups. All projects from the first two cohorts are listed in Table 1.

## Leadership in Practice

As authors of this study, we are all educators, faculty, and practitioners involved in the conceptualization and delivery of this new doctoral program at the University of Hawai‘i (UH) to support and develop strong education leaders for our state. We suggest that for leadership programs in education to meet the complex needs of our communities, it requires an innovative mindset that can be responsive to

<b>Public K–12 Schools</b>	Formative Assessment through the Data Team Process Kauhale O Wai‘anae Youth Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Initiative The Mililani Complex Character Education Program Looping at Mililani ‘Ike Elementary School
<b>Public K–12 Charter Schools</b>	Defining Student Success in a Hawaiian Language Immersion Charter School Kikaha Nā Iwa (Exploring Post-Secondary Transitions) Papakū Makawalu and Brain Research Data-Driven Decision Making for Hawai‘i Public Charter Schools Network
<b>Independent Schools &amp; Community Groups</b>	Transitions in Technology at Punahou School HAIS Accreditation Project Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy, Evaluation of Teacher Training Program Feasibility Study for a Charter School serving Micronesian Students

Table 1. Consultancy Projects: Cohorts I and II

a generative culture of leadership that fosters change. As a team of faculty and students we decided that we wanted to conduct a qualitative case study to understand the impact of the consultancy projects on student and client learning. We analyzed three community-based action research projects over two years (2014–2016) within a practice theory framework. Within these ecologies of practice, we were particularly interested in exploring the relationship between the communities we were conducting research in and within our own learning community at the University of Hawai‘i. This approach supports a theoretical framework that explores how new behaviors, phenomena, and properties can emerge within these practices.

Throughout this paper, we employ the concept of ‘practice architectures’ (Kemmis 2012) as a key social learning theory within a communities of practice framework. Lave and Wenger (1991) developed the term “community of practice” to signal an important shift in learning theory that privileged learning as “in integral and inseparable aspect of social practice” (31). John Dewey’s (1919) understanding of schooling’s role in developing democratic citizenry established the importance of socio-cultural elements of learning. Communities of practice, also called professional learning communities, have become synonymous with teacher

learning. Within communities of practice, practice theory has developed the term ‘learning architecture’ as a useful analytic tool to examine situated learning theory within a community of practice. Practice theory as an analytic lens for professional learning encourages a deeper level of understanding of the dynamic, evolving, and emerging elements of change that happen within living systems of practice. Kemmis et al. (2014) have reconfigured Wenger’s ‘learning architectures’ into ‘practice architectures’ to support a theory of educational change that focuses on the interrelated ecologies of practice: sayings, doing and relating, across living systems of schools.

### **Practice Theory as an Analytic Lens to Understand Organizational Leadership**

Although the term ‘communities of practice’ implies “participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities” (Lave and Wenger 1991, 98), the need to deepen understanding about how these communities actually operate is important for how leadership can support such practices. The study employed four forms or dualities of learning architectures to support the analysis of how communities of practice

operate. These forms can also be thought of as sayings, doings, and structures that are analyzed as interrelated sets of practices, rather than ideals or ways people connect up together. Significant in the findings from this study was the ‘messiness’ of organizational learning despite the influence that leaders can have in responding to and making sense of this messiness in a nuanced manner within communities of practice (36). The notions of shared leadership and relational trust have become important factors in supporting teachers in a time of high accountability practices and school restructuring and reforms. Learning architectures highlight concepts that helps us understand how participants learn with and from each other within communities of practice.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

As stated earlier, the purpose of this research is to explore the impact of the program’s consultancy project within the communities of Hawai‘i. To do this, we analyze three projects conducted by groups of cohort II students over two years (2015–2016). Our findings suggest that as students and clients work together, they act to create transformative learning as a form of leadership practice. Kemmis et al. (2014) describe the practices between students and clients as practice of architectures, where sayings (e.g., language-discursive spaces), doings (e.g., activities that participants undertake), and relatings (e.g., relationships that occur in the practice) can enable and constrain learning that emerges. Some structures may be pre-existing and others may be new (e.g., developed when a certain practice unfolds), but through exploring the structures that develop and hold them together, we are able take a closer look at how they work together.

These questions drove our analysis:

1. How does the form and content of the practices of student learning influence the form and content of clients’ practices?
2. In what ways did student learning and client learning act together to create transformative learning as a form of leadership practice?
3. What role did practice architectures play in supporting transformative learning?

We now outline the projects that were part of our case study analysis.

### **The Projects**

#### ***Educational Looping at Mililani ‘Ike Elementary: A Report on Faculty Perspectives***

This consultancy project was a collaborative process between Mililani ‘Ike and the EdD student consultancy group. Upon accepting the consultancy proposal, the University of Hawai‘i students met with the client to discuss the scope and goals of the project. A timeline was established and email correspondence and meetings were set up for questionnaire distribution, deadlines, and scheduling of focus groups. Within months of collecting and analyzing data, the consultancy group put together a report to share their findings. This was shared via email and then a face-to-face meeting with the staff at the school.

Looping in education is a teaching practice of keeping students together with the same teacher for two or more years. It is also referred to as multi-year placement or multi-year grouping. While Mililani ‘Ike espouses education looping, this trend was being questioned as to its efficacy and its impact on faculty workload and staff morale.

The goal of the consultancy project was to report perspectives, including gathering data from faculty through questionnaires and in focus groups, to determine if the educational practice of looping supports the school’s mission and future direction.

#### ***Feasibility Study for a Charter School Serving Micronesian Students***

The purpose of the study was to conduct a feasibility study for the establishment of a Micronesian culture-based charter school or other educational program in the state of Hawai‘i. Community partners representing four organizations came together with this common goal. There are a growing number of Micronesian families living abroad, specifically in Hawai‘i. Micronesian students and families have expressed an on-going dissatisfaction regarding their negative experiences at school and work.

In the last twenty years, Hawai‘i has seen an exponential increase in the number of migrants from Compact of Free Association (COFA) countries: the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau. These students have suffered low graduation rates, high behavior referrals, and insufficient academic progress. While the Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE) has tried a

number of strategies, including hiring bilingual part-time teachers to help English Language Learners (ELL), the strategies have not led to widespread student success. These small island countries share many cultural values, but are also quite diverse.

The unique opportunity that this consultancy project presented was that there were four different clients that on three islands. The Hawai‘i-based non-profit organizations—Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE), Micronesian United-Big Island (MU-BI), The Learning Coalition (TLC), We Are Oceania (WAO)—commissioned the feasibility study for the establishment of a Micronesian culture-based charter school or other educational program. Though each organization has their own mission and vision, their interest to better serve the Micronesian community at large was the same. One of the first exercises for students in this project was to bring the four clients together to better understand their individual needs as well as their collective voice. Each client answered questions to help orient the consultancy group direction while providing important information about their values and vision for the project.

The primary mode of data collection came via focus groups, from six to fifteen participants. From the onset of the project, the consultancy group chose to conduct qualitative research to better understand the needs of the Micronesian community. Focus groups provided the study with a wide variety of perspectives and voices to broaden our understanding of the clients’ needs.

### ***Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy: Evaluation of a Teacher Training Program***

The Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy (KVA) project was a collaboration with the organization’s director aimed at evaluating a teacher training program, a service provided by the non-profit community organization. Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy provides learning experiences for students using a canoe as a living classroom. In order to facilitate further exploration of concepts presented during those experiences, KVA provides professional development for teachers.

The student consultancy group met with the client several times before beginning research to become familiar with the organization and define the scope of the project. Developing a relationship with the client was vital to the consultancy group’s ability to gain access to information

necessary for our team to provide quality feedback to the client. The first two meetings with the client were purposefully not focused on the project, but on the client, finding out more about the client’s background and goals. Once the group had a better understanding about the client and organization, it began to work on defining the scope of the project. The process of defining project goals was a collective effort between the client, consultancy group and faculty mentors. The agreed upon goal was to evaluate Kānehūnāmoku’s teacher training program and identify areas for improvement.

Questionnaires completed by teacher participants and interviews with individuals from four stakeholder groups (employees, community organizations, administrators, and other canoe organizations) provided the data for the study. The EdD consultancy team analyzed the data collected as a group and identified themes that emerged. The themes suggested that areas for improvement could be grouped into four categories: curriculum, marketing, networking, and funding. The results were presented to Kānehūnāmoku leadership and staff during their annual staff retreat. Client feedback indicated that the information from the final report was valuable for future work and many of the themes we discussed prior to the final report were actually put into action before the project was completed.

### **Methods**

Both existing and new data were analyzed for this qualitative study. Consultancy project data from final reports and program evaluation questionnaires completed by both previous and current students, mentors, advisors, and community partners were collected. Questionnaires asked about the proposal submission and review process, project and consultancy constructs, consultancy team interactions, and overall value of the consultancy project component of the EdD program. Students were also asked to respond about the roles that emerged for team members and time spent on various project components.

New questionnaires were completed by current students from three identified consultancy groups who expressed interest in contributing to the research and evaluation process. The new questionnaire asked students on the research team to reflect on their learning as part of the consultancy work. Questionnaires were also distributed to the clients for the same three identified consultancy

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projects. To investigate how the ecological arrangements composing the practice of educational leadership enhanced transformative learning in student and client landscapes, the respondents were asked to describe the new ways students, faculty, and clients related to each other (*relatings*), the activities taken to complete these projects (*doings*), and the existing and new forms of understanding (*sayings*) that emerged in the consultancy process. Utilizing practice theory, the questionnaires were designed based on the research questions and then distributed to current students and community partners of the three identified consultancies.

Data were analyzed through a practice theory framework, including the concepts of ‘ecologies of practices’ and ‘travelling practices (Kemmis et al. 2014). Phase I analysis involved deductive coding based on themes that arose from our research questions and theoretical framework. Phase I codes included *student learning*, *client learning*, *transformation of practice–architectures that hold practices*. Both existing and new data from the questionnaires were coded inductively in phase II of our analysis. Three interdependent, interconnected, and intersubjective architectures of transformation emerged through the sayings, doings, and relatings described in the data (Kemmis et al. 2014): *collaboration* and support within consultancy project groups and at clients’ sites, new experiences leading to *mindset* transformation, and identity development as *scholars* and professionals (e.g., a climate of individual and professional growth). These new codes in phase II we labeled new *mindsets*, *collaboration*, and *support for identity and growth as scholars*. We have submitted the full report of our analysis for publication, but would like to highlight only one of our findings here, *growth as scholars*. We end with a discussion about the implications of this work.

## **Analysis**

### ***Growth as Scholars***

The results from the architecture of growth as scholars draw on comments from both clients and students. Clients gained professional knowledge that allowed them to enhance their own educational practice. For example, one client wrote, “We started out having a vague idea of what information we were looking for that could support the work that we were doing in our school. Given that and the overall complexity

and dull subject matter of the brain and cognitive function, the group did an excellent job in providing a well-thought out and functional product with recommendations on how their research could support our current & future efforts. If they were available to contract for a second year of consultancy work, we would definitely jump at that opportunity!” Another client identified “the need for consistent self evaluation.”

Students leveraged consultancy projects as initiation into the practice of conducting research towards individual dissertations. For example, “This was an extremely helpful process in preparation for the research done for our dissertations. Doing this project as a group provided support needed for novice researchers like us,” and “I learned the process to create a project/dissertation. It helped prepare students with a similar approach to work individually on his/her dissertation.” Students expressed “this was a great experience in helping me get ready for my individual dissertation,” and “this gave me good practice to focus on a topic and create applicable and effective survey questions.”

Students also described affective experiences that pointed towards learning, “I had many uncomfortable moments doing different parts of the research (interview – can we diverge from the script?; transcript – what do I leave in?; analysis – how do we know we coded consistently? Does it make sense to exclude an outlier participant?) and still wonder if we did it “right.” This means I learned.” One student commented, “[it was] not so much what we learned, but how we learned” that led to transformation.

The student participants in the Micronesian consultancy project learned a lot about the role of indigenous protocol in conducting researching. Focus groups ranged in size from six to fifteen participants and were approximately two hours in length. All Micronesian jurisdictions were represented in at least one focus group: Chuuk, Kosrae, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Pohnpei, and Yap. Three focus groups represented women and two represented men. In addition to including an additional women’s focus group, the participant numbers were also larger in the women’s groups. The gender breakdown was 37 women and 13 men. In general, the focus groups included participants with a diverse background of educational attainment, English language skills, and socio-economic status. The participants represented a wide range of education and socio-economic backgrounds. The

indigenous research protocols that were respected and practiced yielded authentic and reliable data as participants in their own voices shared powerful stories of their life experiences living in a new land and raising their children.

For students of Native Hawaiian ancestry, the Voyaging consultancy project affirmed the importance of research that can privilege knowledge that is rooted in a long history of cultural practice within the local community. The consultancy group selection process enabled students in the EdD program to select a topic and group members that aligned with individual professional and academic interests. The students reported that prior to selecting potential projects, clients shared proposals with the cohort and gave a brief overview of the project purpose. Each member of the consultancy group had a strong desire to work within the Native Hawaiian community and the project proposal presented by KVA's director resonated with each of them. The participants in this student group commented that they felt fortunate to be assigned a mentor with a strong connection to Native Hawaiian education, which was instrumental in their learning process throughout the project. The relationships developed before even beginning the project enabled the team, along with the mentor and advisor, to have a shared vocabulary related to Native Hawaiian education and program evaluation.

### **Discussion and Implications: Social Justice Leadership Practice**

There are several implications within our study: living systems, traveling practices, reciprocal transformation and growth, and community benefit. Living systems conceptualizes the practice of our consultancy projects in the present but are part of a living system that draws from both the past and the present while looking to the future. Community benefit extends the importance of consultancy projects well beyond the personally significant dissertation defense and graduation. As students and faculty, we saw evidence of development as intellectuals and scholars across sites with a common goal of advancing professional knowledge and equity in the educational landscapes of Hawai'i. The impact of the consultancy project was significant for both consultancy group and client. Feedback from one of the clients gives evidence of the future impact of the project:

KVA's experience working with the consultancy project was awesome. They were very patient and professional with us. Pushing us when we needed to be pushed for info and interviews. They stayed on top of things and kept us engaged. Not easy to do! Their presentation to us and final report was an amazing review of all we have accomplished and what we hope to accomplish in the coming years. As we enter a new season of grant writing we will surely draw upon this work as we seek new funding.

As revealed in this statement, the consultancy studies made visible the ecological relationships that were pre- and post-existing in the local connections between practices of various natures, described by Kemmis (2012) as "different kinds of subsidiary practices" (887). The three examined projects show how new 'ecologies of practices' in the consultancies were shaped not solely by knowledge and steps taken by the participants within the structure of the projects but also by previous and future accomplishments comprising a living system of doings, sayings, and relating that will continue to function after the projects' end. Even though pre-existing, internal actions and knowledge that held the arrangements in the projects became part of their living constructs where practitioner students, clients, faculty, and other local actors come into interdependent relationships making the practice of leadership a continuum of interactions, knowledge-construction, and transformative learning enhancing local community benefit.

Traveling practices in the observation of these particular arrangements shows how two independent practices—those of students and clients—were able to 'travel' across practitioners' and clients' sites and to impact one another in a process of reciprocal transformative learning and growth. Student-student relationships, student-mentor relationships, and student-client relationships all worked interdependently in the development of the final project as well as in the development of "sayings, doings, and relating of practices" (Kemmis et al. 2014, 47). Conversations with client and mentors allowed the groups to practice the discourse for negotiating that is necessary for narrowing and defining the scope of a project. The application of academic "sayings," such as, theoretical framework, methodology, and themes deepened student and client understanding of each of these terms.

Reciprocal transformation and growth refers to consultancy projects that have the potential to design

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ecological spaces of interrelated learning communities where groups of learners, which comprise doctoral students and clients, collaborate in an organic practice, generate new experiences provoking old mindsets, and engage in transformative learning that enhances social justice leadership practice. For the consultancy group, skills and practices were learned as part of the practice of completing the project. Group members felt much more prepared for the dissertation process as a result of completing the consultancy group project. This type of preparation may not have occurred through other coursework or projects. Kemmis et al. (2014) goes on to say, “Learning a practice entails entering—joining in—the projects and the kinds of sayings, doings and relatings characteristic of that particular practice” (58). While the Voyaging consultancy project were in the data collection phase of the project, their team participated in a workshop conducted by KVA. This experience gave the group an opportunity to experience some of the themes they found emerging from the data. “Doing” in this manner allowed for much deeper understanding of not only the organization, but also the data they were analyzing.

## Conclusion

By examining how leadership relates to the educational practices of learning, service, and researching, we contend that consultancy projects design ecological spaces of interrelated learning communities where groups of learners comprising doctoral students and clients collaborate in an organic practice, generate new experiences provoking rethinking of old mindsets, and engage in transformative learning that enhances social justice leadership practice.

Our examination of three consultancy projects produced several commonalities in thematic structures. The projects offered interdependent, interconnected, and intersubjective architectures of transformation. These architectures shared an ecology of collaboration, developing new experiences leading to the transformations of old mindsets, and cultivated an atmosphere of learning together. The consultancy projects transformed into an evaluative process of the client as well as a self-evaluation of the researchers, themselves.

In the ecology of collaboration, researchers worked with mentors and advisors in seeking support, guidance, and direction, which enhanced the researchers own

communication skills and strengthened teamwork. In turn, the transformation of old mindsets were reflected by the opportunities offered through the consultancy projects, challenging the student researchers’ understanding about educational issues and the roles they play in social justice paradigms. As one student reported: “This was a journey of social justice more than a project” (student course evaluation, 2015).

Through the process of preparation and work on the consultancy project, students reported a sense of support from one another to lead each other and learn from one another, while navigating through the process together. Our findings show that consultancy projects, which are conducted a year before dissertations in practice in our EdD program, not only enhanced students’ and clients’ leadership practice while contributing knowledge and proposing solutions to local educational issues, but also functioned as organic ecologies of practices that both assisted the educational institutions (clients) they served and prepared student practitioners to design and conduct individual dissertation research later. This study gives evidence of how the University of Hawai‘i EdD program uses a design process of collaborative research projects that prepares and facilitates doctoral students’ knowledge beyond individual learning, toward learning that is viewed as a ‘living system’ (Capra 1996) of collaboration, interdependence, and reciprocity.

The practices of the consultancy projects occurred in the present, but are part of a complex living system that draws from the present and past as it looks to the future. This is a complex landscape in Hawai‘i’s educational system that continues to struggle for effective ways to support educational self-determination for Native Hawaiians as well as provide culturally responsive and equal access to education for all of Hawai‘i’s children. We assert that the consultancy project framework of our EdD program resulted in an ecological space of interrelated learning communities where groups of learners, comprising doctoral students and clients, collaborated in an organic practice that generated new experiences that provoked old mindsets and engaged in learning that enhanced one of the principles of the Hawai‘i EdD program: social justice leadership practice. We are so pleased to be able to contribute to this special issue to highlight the tremendous work the EdD program has accomplished over its six years of implementation.

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# Life Long Learning is an Incredible Gift!

*Theresa F. Lock*

I have been working for over four decades in the field of early childhood education (ECE). I am currently entering my fifth year as an early childhood teacher educator with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education. In my role, I am teaching future professionals in a dual degree program with a preschool through third grade (PK–3) and elementary (K–6) focus and providing professional support to school principals and teachers in our state's public prekindergarten program.

Three years ago, I was excited to be accepted into the second cohort of the UHM College of Education's doctor of education (EdD) in professional educational practice program. On Saturday, July 22, 2017, I was among twenty-five doctoral candidates who graduated from the EdD program. Feelings of joy and gratitude swept over me when I heard my name being called and as I walked across the Kennedy Theater stage to be hooded by my dissertation committee members. As I accepted my diploma from university leaders, it was a surreal moment to be recognized as a doctor! This is a dream that I have had for many years, and it finally became a reality.

As I reflect back over the past three years, some of my personal highlights of this doctoral journey were the people, the content and process, and my dissertation.

## **The People**

I knew a cohort experience was the right pathway for me and from day one, I was not disappointed. During our first meeting, I instantly found that I was with a unique and diverse group of caring, positive, intelligent, and gifted educational leaders. Cohort members represented different sectors: public, public charter, private, early childhood, K–12, higher education and came from Maui, Hawai'i Island, and O'ahu. We came with similar and different life experiences and a strong common desire to improve our education system. Through our doctoral journey we became a tight-knit community as we shared and supported the ups and downs of our personal and professional lives. Our cohort was surrounded by the expert knowledge and

skills of our experienced directors, program manager, staff, faculty, advisors, and mentors. They generously provided the content, structure, and guidance for us to learn and develop as a community of doctoral candidates. They challenged us, listened to us, and more often than not, they allowed us to co-construct our learning with them.

## **The Content and Process**

I appreciated the rigorous content and the learning strategies of this program that was carefully crafted and taught by our faculty. This consisted of readings, discussions, and assignments on topics such as, research methodologies, inquiry approaches and theories, curriculum and program evaluation, and applied statistics. While exploring identity, diversity, and leadership in the social and cultural contexts of educational settings, we examined complex problems in education that focused on questions of equity, ethics, and social justice. We read and discussed areas of effective educational leadership and administration such as types of school leadership, policy making in education, technology leadership, and professional development. A critical part of our curriculum was information and guidance from mentors and advisors in the development and completion of our group consultancy projects to resolve complex problems of educational practice in our surrounding communities.

## **My Dissertation**

One of the most meaningful yet difficult learning experiences was the planning and writing of my dissertation in practice. For example, in the planning stage, I found it both exciting and challenging to refine and be more precise about my problem of practice related to my work. I struggled to link my theories as a practitioner with a systematic inquiry process. This included starting an early review of the literature, and returning to conduct additional review of more literature as I collected data through my multiple case study and during my data analysis process. I found that I had to be extremely disciplined about my time as I worked on my dissertation. In the writing, re-writing,

editing, and formatting of my dissertation, it worked best if I did it in a systematic manner. However, sometimes my process was not a straight forward path. I had to remind myself that I was working against the clock. It was extremely helpful to have the experience and assistance of my dissertation advisor and committee members who kept steering me forward. When I finally submitted my completed dissertation to the UHM graduate office, it was a huge relief and accomplishment.

### **Presenting our Work**

From July 18 through July 20, 2017, our EdD program conference was held at UHM's physical education athletic complex lecture hall. The purpose of the conference was to provide each member of our cohort an opportunity to present our finished or near finished individual dissertations to the public, to one another, and to those who guided us along this individualized portion of our journey. The presentations were organized by themes: 1) Ho'okahua: 'O ke kahua ma mua, ma hope e kūkulu, Establishing a foundation for teaching and learning; 2) The historical present of language and culture in Hawai'i; 3) Community, leadership, and transformation; 4) Approaches to curriculum development; 5) Leadership and communities of practice; 6) Approaches to improving student achievement; 7) Developing successful leaders; and 8) Culturally-based teaching and learning.

As I listened and watched each person share an overview of the features of his or her dissertation and explain what insights were learned through each research study, I was deeply moved by the intellectual rigor, confidence, and sincere gratitude displayed by each cohort member. As each one spoke so eloquently and passionately, a sense of pride welled up inside of me that reflected the transformative learning journey we had been on together. I found myself reflecting on my own personal and professional growth and felt thankful for the gift of this doctoral program.

A few days ago, I re-read an article written by Dr. Carl A. Grant (2012) as part of our discussions about social justice issues in education. In his article entitled "Cultivating Flourishing Lives: A Robust Social Justice Vision of Education," Grant argued that the current purpose of the U.S. education system, which has been focused on the preparation of our students for employment and consumerism, is too narrow a vision. Rather, Grant proposed that

education should be about the cultivation of flourishing lives for all students. Regardless of race, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, language, religion or gender, each student's individual interests, talents, and aptitudes should be nurtured. Grant stated that we first need to be clear about the meaning of *cultivating* and *flourishing*, where every child is given time and attention to become a thriving individual, a citizen "living with and practicing wisdom, beauty, and the common good" (Castoriadis 1991, 123). Grant emphasized that we need to acknowledge that what constitutes a flourishing life for our students is shaped by the history and culture of the group to which an individual belongs. Furthermore, Grant explained that the idea of personal flourishing is an ethical commitment at the heart of multicultural democratic education.

As the UHM College of Education's EdD program strives to become an effective educational leadership development program that takes experienced practitioners and grows them into scholarly-practitioners, I believe this doctoral program and all those who graduate through this program can implement a robust social justice vision of education in our state. My wish for my grandchildren and all keiki of Hawai'i is that they will have an education that will be responsive to who they are and with a robust social justice of education, vision they will have flourishing lives.

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# From Mo'olelo to Mana'o: Transforming Postsecondary Support Systems for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education Students

*Erin N. K. Thompson*

*Dedicated to Dr. Ernest "Niki" Libarios Jr. An inspirational educator, mentor, and friend*

As a recent graduate of EdD program, this paper serves as a reflection of my growth as a practitioner scholar. I named my dissertation in practice an *action research narrative inquiry* to honor the story of my students at Leeward Community College. My dissertation is just a beginning step towards transforming teacher education support systems to meet the needs of Native Hawaiian students.

When considering the educational status of minority and Indigenous students in postsecondary settings, institutional actors such as counselors, instructors, and administrators tend to view the issue through a superficial, one-dimensional lens of diversity, treating it as a general characteristic of the institution rather than acknowledging the "particular circumstances of the racial and ethnic groups that constitute diversity" (Bensimon 2005, 100). Even those that may be aware of the educational status of specific ethnic groups are "more likely to make stereotypical attributions, such as associating deficit with blacks and Hispanics and achievement with whites and Asians" (Bensimon 2005, 100). Although an apathetic or cursory attempt to understand the intricacies of our students' cultures, and in this case the Native Hawaiian culture, are not overtly discriminatory, neither do they promote an atmosphere of *real* equity and social justice. In regards to faculty of color, Johnsrud and Sadao (1998) identified the lack of Indigenous knowledge at the institutional level as the primary factor in creating a separatist environment, resulting in Native Hawaiian and minority faculty experiencing a sense of "otherness" in the workplace (325). Bensimon (2005) feels that the reduction of inequities in higher education does not depend on the latest innovative training program or touted best practice, but rather "lies within individuals, specifically, in their capacity to develop equity as their cognitive frame" (100).

The process of developing a conscious mindset for equity begins with educating ourselves about the cultures of the

students that we serve. This study attempts, on a small scale, to do this by presenting the voices of 50 Native Hawaiian Teacher Education haumāna with the intent to understand the cultural and educational experiences that have shaped their views of education and use that knowledge to inform student support services at Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program. The design of my study focused on collecting the perspectives of my Native Hawaiian students through qualitative surveys (i.e., Hui o nā Mana'o Haumāna), interviews and mo'olelo (i.e., Hui o nā Mo'olelo Haumāna), and a focus group (i.e., Hui Ho'oholomua). As an action research narrative inquiry, the study's findings directly impact the way in which I, as the counselor for the AAT program, view my work and my relationships with my haumāna. Realizing that the implications of this study would impact the way I have been engaging in student support and advising activities, especially with my Native Hawaiian students, for the past twenty years, I had to ask myself if I was genuinely ready to hear what the data was telling me and make the necessary changes in my attitudes, actions, and interactions with my students. After some reflection, a quick prayer, and a big breath, I answered myself with a definitive "Yes."

## **Weaving Moena o nā Pua**

With the gathering of all the elements from Hui o nā Mana'o Haumāna, Hui o nā Mo'olelo Haumāna, and Hui Ho'oholomua, the weaving of the Moena o nā Pua<sup>1</sup> commences. I am greatly influenced by the words of Benham and Heck (1998) who state:

The work of the storyteller is to recollect and re-collect events, then reflect on the events' multiple meanings, both personal and public and within their time and across time. This reflection extends the mind not only to what is known, but to what is surprising. Kaona is the goal here, that is to tolerate

ambiguity and shifting meanings in order to come to truth. As all things in Hawaiiana are practical, the process of storymaking presses the storyteller to make sense of these multiple thoughts within a current context; that is, to consider the political, the social, and the cultural. Once these thoughts are framed and articulated in a text, the storymaker must encourage—even propose—action. (xvi)

As I reflect on what has been revealed by *nā pua* through this process, I realize that although this is their story, I am the storyteller. If their voices and ideas are the key elements in the creation of *Moena o nā Pua*, then I am the weaver. When I contemplate this role, I feel the weight of this awesome responsibility. Benham and Heck (1998) speak of the purposeful nature of *mo'olelo*, the lesson to be learned, and the *kaona*<sup>2</sup> to ponder in search of truth. McDougall (2016) provides a comprehensive discussion on the various explanations of *kaona* as articulated by revered Native Hawaiian historians, poets, and cultural authorities, but I gravitate towards her reference of the 'Ōlelo No'eau, "Pali ke kua, mahina ke alo" (The back is a cliff, the face a moon) to provide the context of *kaona* for this study. McDougall (2016) states that:

We can read *ke kua* (the back) and *ke alo* (the face or front) as a duality that mirrors how meaning is constructed in *kaona*. The front, which must shine like the moon, is the surface or literal meaning that most audiences can enjoy and read. The back, however, which must hold up the entire structure of *kaona* with the straightness and strength of a cliff, comprises the layers of figurative meaning lying under the literal. (39–40)

It is important to understand and acknowledge the cultural values, practices, and language patterns of our students as well as their experiences and influences in developing their relationship with education and a teaching career. Beyond that, I asked myself, "What is the spirit of the findings? What is *ke kua*, the strong back, the foundation on which these findings are built? As I reflected on the *mana* of the words shared by *nā pua*, I approached my review as if reading a long, detailed, multifarious narrative. In this process, two questions drove my rumination, "What do *nā pua* want me to know? What do they want me to do?" As a result, the *kaona*, or the spirit of the findings, emerged and at last, I knew what message or *pāwehe* would appear on *Moena o nā Pua*.

## Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model

Wheatley and Rogers (1998) explain the importance of identity development and maintenance for all living organisms:

Life organizes around identity. Every living thing acts to develop and preserve itself. Identity is the filter that every organism or system uses to make sense of the world. New information, new relationships, changing environments—all are interpreted through a sense of self. This tendency toward self-creation is so strong that it creates a seeming paradox. An organism will change to maintain its identity. (14)

As I went back to the raw data, reviewed transcripts and survey results, and read my formative and summative findings, I realized that each morsel of data was inimitable and significant in its individualism. I was careful not to trivialize the uniqueness of each *mo'olelo*, comment, or suggestion by making broad-sweeping statements or forcing overarching categories just for the sake of presenting a Euro-American modeled and sanctioned research template. However, when I looked and listened closely, I was inspired by the message I was hearing. To me, my Native Hawaiian AAT students were giving me a roadmap to the successful development of their own identities grounded in four principles of building *pilina* or relationships with their Native Hawaiian culture, education, 'ohana, and our AAT program.

As I looked deeper into the findings, my ever-present guiding principle of *Nā Piko 'Ekolu*<sup>3</sup> materialized, this time with each component serving as a cornerstone to the development of an identity and achievement model for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student success. I found that my *Hui o nā Mo'olelo Haumāna* participants, who had all persisted in the AAT program and were continuing successfully in further education or employment as a teacher, had a well-developed sense of self in terms of their *pilina* with their culture, education, and 'ohana. Wilson et al. (2011) support this stating that "students who maintained a strong identity were able to strategically counter and critique the alienating effects of the university culture and its curriculum" (703). In presenting a portion of their findings from the Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education Study, Kana'iaupuni and Ledward (2013) conclude that "great teachers have ample knowledge about content and instruction, and they also understand the fundamental importance

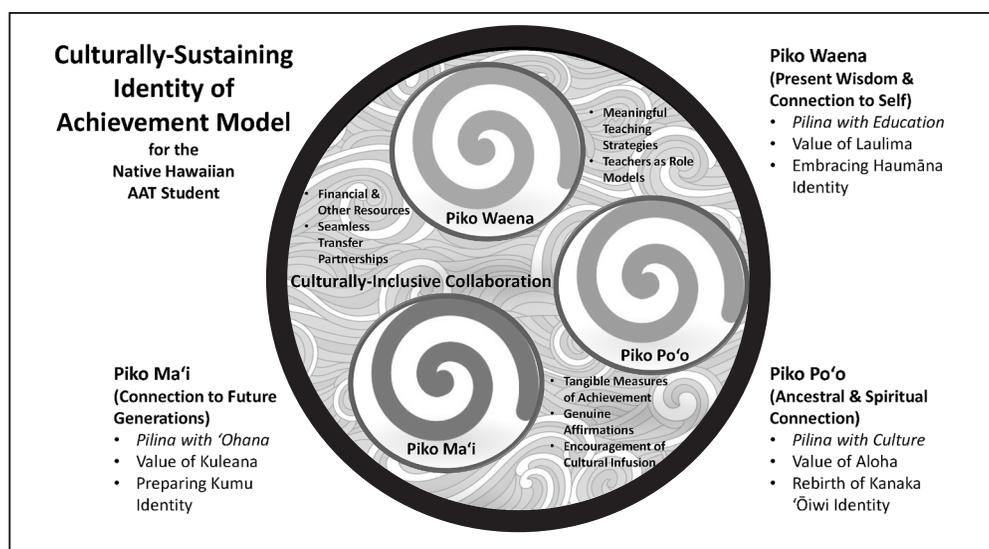


Figure 1. *Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model*

of cultural relevance and relationships in their work with children and their families” (153).

As counselors, we often focus on helping our students identify career goals, academic pathways, and resources needed to reach set goals. These are necessary steps when helping students navigate effectively through the chaotic maze of higher education policies and procedures. However, the message from *nā pua* is not just about identifying goals and reaching them, it permeates much deeper to their essence, their *mauli*. It is about developing a sense of who they are. It is about rebirthing their spirit as *kānaka 'ōiwi*, discovering and embracing their validity as *haumāna*, and preparing their path as future *kumu*. Incorporating the spirit of the message gleaned from *nā pua* and inspired by the artistic design of the 'Ekolu Piko bone carving created by local artisan and carver Benjamin Muti, I developed an image to illustrate an achievement model whose cornerstones are rooted in culturally-sustaining pedagogy, self-awareness and mindfulness on both the parts of *nā pua* and the advisor, and the infusion of reciprocity.

There are four components to the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model: Piko Po'o (Ancestral/Spiritual Connection), Piko Waena (Present Wisdom/Connection to Self) and Piko Ma'i (Connection to Future Generations), and the interaction between counseling and advising professionals and *haumāna*, which I describe as culturally-inclusive collaboration. The metaphor of the

*piko* is critical to the model because it represents the centering and mindful connectivity to three areas of the Native Hawaiian AAT student's development of an identity of achievement. The purpose of this model is to provide a guide that counseling and advising professionals (i.e., myself) can refer to and share with students in order to work together and build a sense of self that embodies the institutions of culture, education, and family. In a study of 16 Aboriginal community college student experiences and perspectives on persistence, Muzzin (2015) states that the “major finding was that First Nations students experience a disconnect between the epistemology of Aboriginal peoples and ways of being in community colleges” (53). By addressing the students' contexts in the areas of education, culture, and family, the goal is to minimize feelings of alienation or non-belonging and show that *pilina* exists between all three in the support of the student's individual achievement. This is important because as counselors, we help our students to recognize, and change if they so desire, their own realities. Wilson (2008) posits that realities are multifarious and defined by relationships that we foster with all that exist in our cosmos. These *pilina* help to define our place and purpose in the world. The Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement model can be used as a tool to help students determine and acknowledge their own connections to the cosmos. It is through this self-discovery that they can then gain clarity in understanding who they truly are.

### **Piko Po’o (Ancestral/Spiritual Connection)**

This Piko Po’o component of the model focuses on the student’s ancestral and spiritual connection to their ethnic culture, which in this case is Native Hawaiian. Represented by the color green, this symbolizes growth and planting roots firmly in one’s cultural identity. There was an undeniable feeling of pride from all of the haumāna about their bloodline and being a part of the Hawaiian genealogy. Nā pua shared a common understanding of the importance of being connected with both the physical and non-physical aspects of their surroundings and living by Hawaiian values. The deficiency appeared when asked about their level of knowledge of their native language and the frequency and quality in which they participated in native practices. Developing opportunities by which pilina with their culture can be nurtured and doing so by incorporating the value of aloha and fostering genuine affection for Indigenous tradition has the potential to awaken and strengthen their kānaka ‘ōiwi identities.

### **Piko Waena (Present Wisdom/Connection to Self)**

In this model, the Piko Waena represents the student’s mindful connection to self. The goal in this area is to be able to understand and add to the wisdom and creativity that already exists in their nā’au and then use that knowledge to embrace who they are as they develop confidence and pride as haumāna. The red hue of the piko represents the passion that develops as nā pua learn about the craft of teaching and begin to see their place within the context of higher education. Through exposure to various teaching principles, strategies, styles and methods of delivery, nā pua begin to envision who they want to be as kumu one day, using those ideals that align best with their personal and cultural orientations. Reflecting on their own educational experiences and influences will bring awareness to why they are the kind of student they are and can be used to further inform their goals and action plans.

Laulima is the guiding value as this piko requires a willingness to cooperate and work with others who have the expertise and resources to guide them on their path. In this piko, it is not the end-goal that is most important, rather, it is being present to where they are in their educational journey and taking the time to reflect on learning gained in the moment and its implications to their

overall development. It is also identifying why they are in education and re-visiting that motivation often to ensure timely adjustments in goals, actions, and the attainment of supports and resources.

### **Piko Ma’i (Connection to Future Generations)**

The third piko is heavily influenced by the Hawaiian value of kuleana that repeatedly appeared throughout all three methods of data collection. This sense of responsibility to perpetuate culture, knowledge, and hope to the next generation is the greatest motivating factor of the haumāna who participated in this study. Shaded in blue to represent the fluidity and life-giving aspects of water, this piko embodies the spirit of reciprocity and allows a free-flow of acquired knowledge and innate wisdom to pass from one generation to the next, ensuring that the life, language, values, practices, and essence of the culture and its people will be protected and preserved.

Piko Ma’i represents a stage in which nā pua prepare for the next step in their journey, usually entering the workforce or transferring to a university teacher education program, that leads them closer to their goal of becoming kumu. It is also in this stage that they clarify who they are and who they want to be as kumu. The relationship or pilina represented in Piko Ma’i is one with ‘ohana. For this model, ‘ohana is not only limited to one’s genealogical kinship, but rather extended to those who influence and enhance their journey as a teaching professional. It emphasizes and requires reflection on how they intend to build pilina with their own haumāna. All of these steps work together to prepare the journey for nā pua to transition to their role of kumu.

### **Culturally-Inclusive Collaboration**

The last component is not represented by piko because it ebbs and flows throughout all three areas of the model. I base the concept of culturally-inclusive collaboration on the foundation of collaborative counseling and psychotherapy as presented by Pare (2012), where “counseling is unveiled as a cultural practice, and clients are viewed as cultural beings” (xxi) and where “counseling comes to be seen less as an exercise in correcting dysfunction or promoting personal growth and more as a cross-cultural collaboration capitalizing on people’s unique knowledge and competencies” (xxii). In Pare’s (2012) presentation of collaborative counseling, the goal is still intervention and therapeutic benefit for the client. However, in this

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educational setting, the outcome is less therapeutic and more exploratory and celebratory in nature. Culturally-inclusive collaboration is a method of interaction between student and academic counselor where the advising function is viewed as a collaborative partnership between both parties with the intent to ground exploration and decision-making activities in the cultural, educational, and familial orientations and priorities of the student.

By definition, counselors and advisors are those who give advice to others and the rapport established usually supports a one-directional flow of information where the student shares the issue or asks the question and the advisor provides the answer. This automatically places advisors in a position of authority and assumed power, sometimes even before the two parties have met. Pare (2012) views interactions between counselors and clients (e.g., students) not only as “vehicles for delivering some form of helpful intervention distinct from the conversation itself” but rather, “the conversation *is* the intervention” where “counselors talk with clients, and the talk itself is what is helpful” (5). Similarly, in culturally-inclusive collaboration the conversation is key. This interchange between advisor and student works best when advisors are open to diverse perspectives (especially those that are contradictory to their own), are willing to show their “humanity” in front of the student which may include humility and vulnerability, and are committed to promoting pride in culture and being open to its infusion throughout the advising process.

Regardless of job title and the supposed roles attached to it, those who enter into a culturally-inclusive collaboration define the relationship as it best suits their dispositions, backgrounds, and objectives of the session. It allows the flexibility for roles to be reversed, where the student is the expert in a particular area such as a specific life history experience or cultural practice or both parties could decide to work as equals and learn together in order to meet agreed-upon objectives. In this model, advisor and student do not just work together to determine the “what” (e.g., goals), “when” (e.g., timelines), and “how” (e.g., action steps) of their intentions. The most important aspects are determining the “why” behind their actions and “who” are they doing this for beyond themselves. In this study, these were the motivational factors that kept our Native Hawaiian AAT students on track for their own achievements. If the three piko in the model are the templates for self-discovery

and authentic reflection, culturally-inclusive collaboration is the method that promotes an environment where non-threatening, honest, and intimate discourse can take place. With a healthy exchange of ideas, values, cultural experiences, and belief systems as prompted by reflecting on the three piko, both advisor and student can gain greater awareness of their own evolving identities as culturally-sustaining educators.

### **Model Application to my Doctoral Journey**

As a reflective practitioner scholar, creating a theoretical model that stimulates provocative discourse is secondary to developing a model of practice that can be rendered useful in my daily interactions with Native Hawaiian AAT students. In an effort to illustrate the utility of the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model, I reflected on its components in application to my own life, specifically my educational journey as a Native Hawaiian doctoral student.

In Summer 2014, I was admitted to the EdD of Professional Educational Practice cohort at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa with 25 other educational leaders and practitioners from P–20 levels of education in Hawai‘i. I applied to the competitive program with the intent to hone my postsecondary leadership skills and academic prowess. Identity development was not my goal when I first entered the program, however, it has been one of my greatest take-aways. Reflecting on this rigorous three year educational epoch, I can now appreciate how the EdD program’s diverse faculty and students, multifarious course readings, community projects, and reflective exercises have shaped my own culturally-sustaining identity of achievement.

The Piko Po‘o of this model speaks to the connection we build with our ethnic and cultural roots. An unexpected benefit of my EdD doctoral journey was experiencing a rebirth of who I am as kanaka ‘oiwi. Various program influences, such as assigned course readings highlighting minority and Indigenous worldviews, my ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i speaking cohort peers and professors, the opportunity to conduct a consultancy group research project for a Hawaiian immersion school, and being sponsored by the EdD program to present at and experience the cultural pride and advocacy of the He Manawa Whenua International Indigenous Research conference, all contributed to the development of pilina with my Native Hawaiian culture.

One particularly poignant class activity, in my Social and Cultural Contexts of Education course, served as the catalyst to my cultural awakening. Led by instructors Dr. Walter Kahumoku III and Dr. Lori Ideta, our class was divided into small groups of five to six students. Each small group had their own 'āina and was asked to develop the values of that island and its people. This first part of the activity fostered a sense of laulima and belongingness. We created 'āina that we believed in and were proud of. All but one person on the 'āina was then instructed to move on as a group to visit a neighboring "island." As the one left behind, I experienced a sense of loss seeing my group move on as well as a kuleana to preserve what we created and adequately explain and share it with the new group coming to visit. When I found out that the "visitors" were allowed to take a portion of what my group had instilled in our island home, I started to downplay what I felt was most important because I did not want them to take it away. I strategically engaged the visitors in discussion so that they did not make their selection in time and my island remained untouched. When the next group of visitors arrived, I became very protective and was in disbelief when they took a piece of my island without asking. I felt violated. After the initial shock, I went into a practical, problem-solving mode trying to determine how I could make my 'āina whole again, which I eventually did. However, it was not the same island I started with, and never would be again. In my course journal, I reflected on the activity and the feelings it provoked. I wrote:

In my heart, I knew that we could re-build [our 'āina], but I also knew that it wouldn't be the same EVER again. Even if we had our island pieces returned to us, they would be altered and the scar of having these components literally ripped away from us would still be there. I was AMAZED at how much emotion went into every single stage of the activity and for the first time, I was beginning to understand what it felt like to be a Hawaiian (or a part of any Indigenous group) and have something taken away. (Thompson, EDEF 762 personal journal, 3)

In reflecting on the **Piko Waena** construct of the model, my EdD educational journey played a critical role in the development of my doctoral student identity. Although the majority of my professional career had been within the realm of higher education, it had been over a decade since I had assumed the role of a student. In this context, strengthening my relationship with education not only as a

provider (i.e., counselor or instructor), but from a consumer (i.e., student) perspective was the priority. This entailed reacquainting myself with the nuances of college such as locating library and research resources, applying for financial aid opportunities, and writing as a scholar as well as finding balance between work, school, and family responsibilities. In essence, I was reminded what my own students are faced with every day and as a result, rejuvenated my empathy for them. The Hawaiian value of laulima was also evident as I embraced my positionality as a doctoral student. Initially unsure of my place, role, and ability to contribute to the EdD cohort of professional educators, I soon understood that many peers felt as I did and together we grew as individual leaders and as a cohesive unit. We cooperated and helped one another so that no one would fall behind in their academic obligations, and in doing so, developed a greater sense of our own places within the program and the larger context of academia.

The **Piko Ma'i** component of the model speaks about developing a kumu identity grounded in the value of kuleana to the next generations and building pilina with 'ohana, however broadly it is defined. Although the term kumu is commonly referred to as teacher, it is also defined as the source, beginning, origin, reason, or goal ("Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i," n.d.). To me, the Piko Ma'i of the model represents the place and time when haumāna prepare for their next steps and contributions upon completion of the educational program. It is the beginning of the formation of their identity beyond the educational experience they are in. As an EdD student, I was given ample opportunity to reflect on my leadership abilities and growth opportunities through self-directed and guided exercises, program projects, and responsive journaling to class readings and activities. I became self-aware of how I develop and sustain relationships with administrators, professors, cohort peers, haumāna, community members, friends, family members, and new associates. I discovered that *how* I relate to and treat others is just as important, if not more important, than *who* I develop pilina with. Reciprocity and a deep sense of kuleana to my 'ohana, which I define as whatever group I am serving at the time was the impetus for obtaining my doctorate and continues to be the foundation for my academic and career aspirations.

Lastly, the faculty and students associated with the EdD program worked together to develop an academically

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rigorous and stimulating environment that allowed **culturally-inclusive collaboration** to develop organically. A shared governance approach in terms of allowing student input into curriculum considerations and program processes created an atmosphere charged with open-mindedness and creativity. In addition, faculty took the time to learn about cohort students' lives outside of the program. Social events, such as a family potluck and barbeque at a classmate's taro farm, allowed faculty and students to engage with one another outside of the classroom and embrace one another's family members, thereby extending the EdD 'ohana beyond the original cohort members.

During my doctoral journey, I experienced growth in each area within the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model. When I first applied to the program, I expected an evolution in my kumu identity, however, I did not anticipate the additional benefits of embracing my haumāna identity or connecting with my Native Hawaiian culture. I had hoped for encouraging professors and supportive cohort members, but what I experienced was an authentic culture of caring and gained an extended 'ohana of educators, forever linked together by a passion to improve Hawai'i's educational systems. The Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model will serve as my guide in providing my students with opportunities and experiences that clarify who they are in terms of where they come from, who they are in our program, and who they dream to be beyond Leeward Community College.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> With elements from each data collection method clearly defined, we can begin to weave a metaphorical moena or mat that captures the voices of nā pua (my students, nāhaumana).
- <sup>2</sup> Hidden meaning ("Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i," n.d.). According to McDougall (2016), there are many explanations of kaona ranging from buried, multi-layered meanings to private jokes to sophisticated episodes of rhetoric intended for exclusivity in meaning-making.
- <sup>3</sup> Nā Piko 'Ēkolu is a Hawaiian construct that describes three metaphysical points on the human body (ie. Piko Po'o: Piko Waena; and Piko Ma'i) that connect kānaka 'oiwi to those who come before us, those who are with us now, and those who will succeed us.

# Taking an Institutional and Programmatic Pause to Incorporate the Value Proposition in a Mixed Evaluation Approach to Evaluating the EdD Program

*Sylvia Hussey and Sanjeev Sridharan*

## Introduction

We start this chapter with the cultural and indigenous context setting that is valued by the authors in answering the question, “Who you?” Not what is your name and academic pedigree, but who are you in terms of your ancestral knowledge, beliefs, mindset, and biases juxtaposed with Western, professional, and life experiences, and brought to the act of evaluating? Both authors come from an ancestral knowledge base that is rooted in family, places, and communities represented by a range and mixture of ethnicity (e.g., Hawaiian, Japanese, East Indian), societal (e.g., plantation, rural, urban, international), professional (e.g., academic, business, education, health, criminal justice, government), and life experiences. “O ke kahua ma mua, ma hope ke kūkulu” (the foundation comes first and then the building) (Pukui #2459)—learn all you can, then practice—is the ‘ōlelo no‘eau (proverb or wise saying in Hawaiian) chosen to frame the foundation-setting work needed to establish the value proposition approach of evaluation to the University of Hawai‘i (UH) EdD program.

Using this frame, we think that any valuing of the EdD program needs to ask these questions: What is the foundation upon which the EdD program is built? How does it help the community? How does it strengthen the family? How does it help Hawai‘i? How does it help the student?

Evaluation is derived from the French verb *évaluer*, meaning “to value.” An evaluation can have many purposes, including assessing the merit and worth of an intervention, improving an organization or program, performing oversight and compliance, and promoting knowledge development (Henry, Julnes and Mark 2000). In this chapter, we bring a mixed approaches lens to develop a framework to evaluate the EdD program. We argue that bringing an explicit process of “valuing” can, in itself, enhance the value of the program. Our own cultural backgrounds guide us to raise fundamental questions on values. Key questions that

emerge from our frame include “What is the foundation needed?” and “How can we measure the value of such foundations?”

The EdD program seeks to prepare professionals in leadership roles in education and other settings. Consider the goal of the EdD program from the UH College of Education’s website: “The Education Doctorate in Professional Educational Practice (EdD) is in line with the call from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) to offer advanced degrees of professional practice that are distinct from doctoral research degrees in education. Doctorates in professional educational practice are advanced degree programs aimed *at preparing professionals for leadership roles at all levels of education, as well as in other positions where the main interest is the application of research in education settings*” (emphasis added).

Our goal in this paper is to develop an initial framework for how to evaluate the EdD program. We restrict ourselves to conceptual issues and introduce ideas that help argue for the need for multiple evaluation approaches. We do not focus on the actual design or data needs to conduct the evaluation.

## Evaluation Question and Stakeholders—the Different Roles of Evaluations

We make three arguments in this chapter. Our first contention is that evaluation can help understand the value of the EdD program. Second, such evaluation needs to be informed by multiple approaches that incorporate diverse ways of valuing, including indigenous lenses. A third argument is that evaluation itself can add value to the EdD program. We argue for a mixed set of evaluation approaches. These evaluation approaches can help us determine the value of the EdD program, but also the explicit act of evaluating can add value to the program (by improving and further developing the program).

We argue that the evaluation of the EdD program at the University of Hawai'i provides a unique opportunity to explore the mechanisms by which an "intervention" such as the EdD program can lead towards enhanced leadership through an application of research in education settings.

A key focus of our paper is our view that the EdD program needs to be evaluated using multiple lenses. These lenses need to correspond to different needs that stakeholders might have of the evaluation. For example, university administrators, such as the dean of the College of Education, might want to know what the impacts of the EdD program are and in what tangible ways is the program achieving its goals.

However, such a focus on impacts needs to be complemented with clarity on the "theory" of the intervention (Pawson et al. 2004; Pawson and Sridharan 2009; Pawson 2013; Sridharan and Nakaima 2011). Note that the claim that applications of research are associated with enhanced leadership in education settings is a theory that needs to be tested. A few evaluative questions emerge in taking a theory-driven lens to evaluating the EdD program: What are the mechanisms by which an application of research can lead towards enhanced leadership or towards better outcomes for students, schools, and communities? What support structures and contexts are necessary for the application of research to lead towards leadership or better outcomes for students, schools, and communities? Are there unintended outcomes and displacement effects as a result of focusing on research as a means of enhancing leadership? Answering all of these questions requires a theoretical frame that can help address the question of how an EdD program actually brings about leadership through research.

The documents, brochures, and website that support the EdD program provide descriptions of the aspirations of the program. The basic pathways by which a journey from providing face-to-face coursework, participation in a field-based project, and completing a dissertation actually leads towards enhanced leadership in the field still need to be described, or surfaced. The evaluation provides a chance to build such a theory of change.

A theory of change typically connects program activities to outputs to outcomes. It also makes explicit the risks and assumptions that underlie an intervention such as the EdD program and describes the contexts and mechanisms that underlie such a journey. As far as we are aware, no such

framework with explicit clarity on the mechanisms and assumptions exists that describes how the EdD program impacts leadership outcomes.

The above two goals—a focus on impacts and a focus on theory of change—provide an instrumental focus on addressing the following two questions: Does the intervention work? If so, how does it work? There is also a more fundamental question of values and principles: How did the values and principles that guided the intervention such as the EdD program help achieve its outcomes?

A more recent use of evaluation is to help develop the intervention itself. Developmental evaluation starts with the proposition that in complex systems and complex societies, most interventions are incomplete (Patton 2010). They need to be developed over time based on the values and principles of the key stakeholders, in this case, the students themselves. Given that the intervention is being developed and delivered in an indigenous society with mixed populations, it is vital that the evaluation framework incorporate indigenous perspectives within it. The EdD program is envisioned by its primary designers and champion to be a social intervention for leadership in education in Hawai'i. Now that two cohorts of students, with a large majority being indigenous, have completed the EdD program, it is vital to also pause and reflect on whether the program as planned is consistent with indigenous perspectives and values—both of what constitutes leadership and what constitutes research—and to better understand indigenous perspectives on the conditions under which research can lead towards enhanced leadership.

### *Initial Steps: Towards a Framework of Evaluation*

One starting point in this "pause and reflect" is to define what *success* means to the multiple stakeholders. How do different stakeholders involved with the EdD program, including the community, education leadership, the dean, the chair, and the students, view the short-term and long-term successes of the program? In what specific ways are the views of success informed by indigenous perspectives? The two cohorts of students provide an especially rich opportunity to explore what "success" of the EdD program means to them and how their own views of success have changed over time. It is important that success not be defined purely at the individual level; eventually an EdD program like this one aspires to bring about changes in schools, education systems, and communities.

The following four principles have helped to guide the planning for this degree. The preparation of quality educators in professional practice should

- ❖ take place, as far as possible, in the context of thinking and acting as a leader in the profession;
- ❖ be conducted in ways that provide opportunities for individuals to work collaboratively in solving problems and implementing appropriate plans of action;
- ❖ include opportunities for the development and application of inquiry skills so that practitioners can apply their research skills to bring about improvements in practice; and
- ❖ provide opportunities in critical and ethical reflection on matters of educational importance.

*Table 1. Planning Principles Guiding Development of EdD Degree*

As a first step, it would be useful to create “space” for individuals to reflect on what success means to them and how those views have changed over time. Note that such an exercise provides the basis for a summative focus, a theory-driven approach as well as a developmental one. At a summative level, clarifying views of success can help define measures to assess if the program was successful. From a theory-driven evaluation approach, a focus on success helps bring clarity on the pathways by which the EdD can lead to success. At a developmental level, it provides the basis for the EdD program planners to better understand what else needs to happen in order to achieve success based on different stakeholders’ values and perspectives.

As a second step, we would develop, in close collaboration with the multiple stakeholders, a theory of change that can help describe the pathways by which the EdD program can achieve the multiple outcomes. As noted earlier, a theory of change provides the opportunity to understand the mechanisms by which an intervention such as the EdD program can bring about change. A theory of change also provides an opportunity to reflect on whether the program as presently implemented and delivered is consistent with the principles guiding its development. Table 1 describes the principles that guided the development of the EdD program.

It is vital in the evaluation process to reflect on the mechanisms by which the EdD is presently structured to actualize these principles. For example, are opportunities for critical and ethical reflections on matters of educational

importance being provided to students? Further, a theory of change is an opportunity to connect such principles and mechanisms to outcomes. Some of the pertinent questions that a theory of change can address include “What does leadership mean and what are the consequences of critical and ethical reflections?” Similar questions can also be asked of other EdD guiding principles. Examples include raising questions on the consequences of working collaboratively to solve problems and applying inquiry skills in practice settings. The critical idea here is we need to move beyond buzz words like collaborative, ethics, critical thinking, and inquiry skills, towards concretely and measurably reflecting on what these mean in practice.

A theory of change will also challenge us to be explicit about the assumptions that link our activities to intended outcomes (Sridharan and Nakaima 2011). For example, one assumption that is worth exploring is whether the guiding principles sufficiently capture indigenous perspectives on collaboration, ethics, and inquiry skills.

### ***Developmental Evaluation: Reconfiguring Future Versions of the EdD Program***

A third approach which we believe is entirely compatible with an impact orientation as well as a theory-of-change focus is developmental evaluation (Patton 2010). A developmental evaluation engages the range of stakeholders to further develop an intervention such as the EdD program. At its heart, the EdD program has an ambitious goal. It is fundamentally about making a difference in practice.

McKegg and Patton (2014) illustrate where and when developmental evaluation is appropriate (14):

<i>Appropriate contexts</i>	<i>Inappropriate contexts</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Highly emergent volatile situations (e.g., the environment is dynamic)</li> <li>❖ Situations that are difficult to plan or predict because the variables and factors are interdependent and nonlinear</li> <li>❖ Situations where there are no known solutions to issues, new issues entirely, and/or no certain ways forward</li> <li>❖ Socially complex situations, requiring collaboration among stakeholders from different organizations, systems, and/or sectors</li> <li>❖ Innovative situations, requiring timely learning and ongoing development</li> <li>❖ Situations with unknown outcomes, so vision and values drive processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Situations where people are not able or willing to commit the time to participate actively in the evaluation and to build and sustain relational trust</li> <li>❖ Situations where key stakeholders require high levels of certainty</li> <li>❖ Situations when there is a lack of openness to experimentation and reflection</li> <li>❖ Situations where organizations lack adaptive capacity</li> <li>❖ Situations where key people are unwilling to “fail” or hear “bad news”</li> <li>❖ Situations when there are poor relationships among management, staff and evaluators</li> </ul>

Table 2. *When is Developmental Evaluation Appropriate?*

Developmental evaluation value proposition. Patton, McKegg, and Wehipeihana (2016) note that the developmental evaluation niche focuses on evaluating innovations in complex dynamic environments in which social innovation is at work (Preface). Patton et al. (2016) quote colleague James Radner regarding the value proposition of a developmental evaluation:

The discipline of *evaluation* has something to offer social innovators that can really help them succeed. Developmental evaluation is based on the insight that evaluative thinking, techniques, practice, and discipline can be a boon to social innovation—that data systemically collected and appropriately tied to users’ goals and strategies can make a difference, even in open-ended, highly complex settings where the goals and strategies are themselves evolving. Developmental evaluation has something distinctive to offer through the way it marries empirical inquiry focused on the *innovation* to direct engagement with the *innovator*. What development evaluators do helps innovators advance social change, but it only works when customized to the very special context of each social innovation.” (1)

In the context of the developmental evaluation for the EdD program, a starting point itself is not research for research’s sake, but rather is about reflecting on how research can lead to improved practice. Understanding how this can happen and what else needs to be further developed are the foci of developmental evaluation.

This process by which educational “research” can lead to improved practice is guided by values. This of course implies better understanding the values that drive both the students and the community. The developmental evaluation provides an opportunity to understand the principles and values of stakeholders.

Developmental evaluation can also be helpful in understanding indigenous perspectives on the EdD program. In what specific ways is the EdD program sensitive to indigenous perspectives on leadership? In what way is the program different because of its presence in Hawai‘i? These are fundamental questions of principles and values that could guide the development of the program. And a developmental evaluation provides opportunities to learn from both present and former students, school leadership, and EdD staff, as well as the community.

We think that principles are easy to apply only in sterile, homogeneous conditions. Developmental evaluation is an invitation to explore the heterogeneities of options that can exist based on multiple cultural perspectives.

Culture-based evaluation framework. From native/indigenous Hawaiian kūpuna (elders), it is understood that there is a physical and mystic linking of the body with forbears of old and descendants to come; this linking was believed to be in the piko of the head (i.e., fontanel), of navel and umbilical cord, and of genitals (Pukui et al. 1975, 294). Aligning the proposed program evaluation work to this concept—*nā piko ‘ekolu*—provides an evaluation foundation and framework that can guide and frame data collection, discussion, discourse, activities, and actions toward the crafting of a programmatic evaluation and broader developmental evaluation plan, considering the following three *mana’o nui* (big ideas) and possible question prompts:

Past—Where have we come from? What is the program’s *mo’okū’auhau* (genealogy, history, background)? What were the intended outcomes of the program and for the participants, in the short term and long term? What impact was hoped for in the program design? How was the program intended to operate as a social innovation or intervention in the education industry/sector in Hawai‘i? How did the institution anticipate reciprocal learning from the program? How did the program anticipate success for itself and the participants?

Present—Where are we now? What have been the experiences of and impact on program leadership; program implementation processes; cohort participant experiences; faculty, advisor and community mentor experiences; institution (within college, university, and system); education sector collaborators; and public education as a whole?

Future—Where are we going? How can programmatic data and experiences shape an evaluation of the larger social innovation of leadership in education and educational leadership in Hawai‘i? What intersections and systemic elements must be considered in the unique context of Hawai‘i where there are constitutionally two official languages—Hawaiian and English?

The cultural framework—*nā piko ‘ekolu*—guides the authors to recommend that the way forward to designing and completing a programmatic evaluation begins with an institutional and programmatic pause to consider the systemic implications and bigger picture.

The institutional and programmatic pause would entail an assessment of the current conditions and whether such conditions would support proceeding with a developmental evaluation approach, utilizing a culture-based evaluation framework of the EdD program.

## Discussion

Our contention in this chapter is that each of the above approaches, impact, theory-driven evaluation, and developmental, are necessary to help better understand if the EdD program is working, how it is working, and what further developments are needed to ensure that the program is relevant to its Hawaiian context and the aspirations of leadership and community in Hawai‘i. We think that taking a narrow lens that focuses simply on impacts and is driven by the needs of a single stakeholder group, such as the school leadership, for example, can privilege one stakeholder over another.

There are multiple problems with such privileging: there is a need for surfacing of values? A narrow focus on impacts does not do that. There is also the danger that a very narrow impact evaluation does not even focus on theory or impact pathways: there might be limited knowledge at the end of the evaluation about how such a program can benefit the community and the educational system.

Evaluations provide an opportunity to enhance democratic processes in decision-making, and we think one way forward is to involve key stakeholders in the future development of the EdD program. We also think that taking such a pluralistic stance towards evaluation can help recognize that different stakeholders have different perspectives, standpoints, and constraints.

In any long-term process of transformation, short-term wins are often needed, and a summative orientation can help understand what some of the short-term successes and failures of such a complex intervention were. It is useful to recognize that most educational programs focus on activities and outputs; there is rarely understanding of how these activities impact outcomes (that are often aspirational).

A theory-driven evaluation provides an opportunity to better understand the linkages between activities and long-term outcomes as well as the support conditions necessary for these activities to lead towards outcomes.

Perhaps most of all, there is value in recognizing that even our best planned interventions are incomplete and

in need of further development. The developmental focus helps us understand what else needs to happen to achieve the full potential of a program. Such a developmental perspective is especially necessary given the cultural context of Hawai'i. Given the rich indigenous setting of Hawai'i, it is imperative that the principles also reflect and incorporate that indigenous world view. It is in this light that the developmental evaluation holds promise in ensuring that a program, such as the EdD, explores what leadership, working collaboratively, inquiry skills, and ethical reflection mean through an indigenous lens. Given the heterogeneity of indigenous cultures that exist, in all likelihood, understanding such principles will lead to richness and confusion (in its best sense). We, however, think that such diversity of views can only strengthen a program that serves such a diversity of individuals.

### Conclusions

Finally, we return to the overall goal of the program with its focus on leadership through an application of research. We think it is vital that we ask questions around what is relevant research that is meaningful to bring about meaningful change in societies. Are the traditional/standard academic definitions of rigor sufficient for such goals? How does a view of rigorous research also incorporate the social relevance and the translatability of such research? We think these are questions that a comprehensive evaluation needs to address, and can address, using the pluralistic approaches described in this paper.

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# Artistry in Practitioner-Inquiry

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## Introduction

The five-chapter dissertation that is common in the field of education is a product of a largely unquestioned set of assumptions about how research should be done and what it should look like. It is a product that is bolstered by a whole set of institutional procedures and requirements that have become somewhat routine in many schools of education—research courses, doctoral committees, and institutional review boards are all part of the vetting process. The five-chapter format is not a recent innovation. Its roots lie in classical rhetoric where it arose as an organizing heuristic in expository compositions, originally in speeches and persuasive discourse. Its obvious utility is borne out by the fact that some version or other of the heuristic is used as the authorized formal guide to composing dissertations in colleges of education and in social science departments nationally and internationally. However, we wish to question the value of the heuristic and some of its assumptions for modes of research that are becoming popular as more and more practitioners are engaging in research on their own practice (Jarvis 1999).

The conversation that initiated this paper focused on issues of confidentiality and rigor. We work with students in a doctoral-level, professional practice program in which many of our students are principals and educational leaders who aim to conduct practitioner projects, and their “dissertations” are therefore focused on dealing with problems of practice at their own institutions. This means that their attempts to maintain institutional anonymity not only seem impractical and impossible (in the small state of Hawai‘i), but also a violation of the very idea of practitioner research. Can they be both practitioner and researcher? We view this dichotomy as problematic—not just because it is a version of the theory-practice dichotomy in which the practitioner is denied the role of legitimate inquirer, but also because it depicts the researcher unrealistically as a sort of non-practitioner.

In addition, conversations about rigor were part of the early and ongoing discussions about our new doctoral

program in professional educational practice, and as we approached the dissertation stage the question of the nature of rigor loomed large. Standards of rigor, validity, and verifiability are codified in textbooks and the rules of confidentiality that are rightfully demanded by human studies committees, but they feel somehow inappropriate in this new setting.

We wondered if there might be different measures of rigor, not only as they apply to the “dissertation as product” but also to the “dissertation as process” and to the dissertation as part of our collective conversation about the “rigor” of the program. We found ourselves talking about the product using cumbersome language like “the paper that we are calling a dissertation” or “the dissertation in professional practice” for want of better terms. We envisioned something different—a more holistic model that did not separate theory from practice, process from product, or the researcher from the research.

Indeed, it seemed to us that the integrity of the whole is dependent on the artful integration of the parts. We believe that a better approach lies in overcoming the pernicious dualism between researcher and practitioner and in reconstructing the idea of the practitioner-inquirer as an artist. Our efforts in this work directed us to Dewey’s aesthetics. In this paper, we take a look at practitioner-research from the perspective of Deweyan aesthetics, drawing on the work of Elliot Eisner (1998), Donald Schön (1983), and others to help us rethink ideas of confidentiality, rigor, and the role of the dissertation.

## Acknowledging Context

As a prelude to the discussion, we need to say a bit more about the context in which our questions and concerns arose. By the time the twenty-eight cohort members embarked on their individual inquiries, they had already completed group consultancy projects in public and independent schools in the state—a project based on a similar one pioneered by Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. These consultancy projects entailed two semesters of research and writing

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and a substantial report that the students presented to teachers and administrators in the schools where they did their studies. Thus, the dissertation in practice did not constitute what is traditionally viewed as a “capstone” project, but one of two major program projects.

The impetus to rethink and reconfigure the traditional education dissertation format grew naturally out of the special nature of practitioner research, but it was also nurtured by the unique context of Hawai‘i. Many educators in Hawai‘i, especially Indigenous educators, are concerned about current educational practices and suspicious of imposed models of research that are neither congruent with, nor respectful of, Indigenous knowledge.

The idea of artistry, then, that we discuss in this paper arises from the epistemological encounters that were inherent in our work in the EdD program. These encounters demanded a critical, reflexive approach that took into account the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of human experience. As one of our Indigenous cohort members notes in her work, “While this study is being conducted to fulfill degree requirement of an American institution, I hope to honor my Indigenous heritage by adapting traditional western academic constructs in ways that are compatible with and supportive of my Indigenous values; ways that lead to achievement of Indigenous educational aspirations” (Hattori 2014, 11). Her view is informed by current educational scholarship in Hawai‘i and the Pacific region that is influenced by Indigenous epistemology and perspectives. Close to half of the members of that first cohort identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and sought inspiration in the work of scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), who call into question colonizing methodologies found in western scholarship about native peoples. Her work invites us to consider approaches that are more respectful and more in tune with Indigenous sensibilities. We tried to avoid the natural duality that this dilemma presented and let our conversations reflect the tensions among different approaches and contrasting views. By acknowledging the complexity of our task, encouraging a critical informed approach, opening the space to ways of knowing that were more intuitive and non-linear, we sought to re-conceptualize the notion of inquiry and approach it through the lens of artistry.

### **The Problems of the Research/Practitioner Dichotomy**

The view that research and practice are distinct endeavors is one that is deeply entrenched in academia, in spite of efforts to challenge its dominance (Schön 1983). In the received opinion, the aim of the researcher is to discover or reveal truths about the world; the role of the practitioner is to apply the discoveries of the researcher in the field of practical affairs. Donald Schön refers to this dominant view as the technical rational model—a view that underwrites a strict division of labor between knowers and doers. His work recounts the 300-year history of the technical rational model that culminates in the neo-positivism of the mid-nineteenth century. But positivism has all but vanished as an acceptable account of science. Wittgenstein (1964), for example, points to our “craving for generality... our preoccupation with the method of science...(and) the contemptuous attitude towards the particular case” (18). Lakatos and Musgrave (1970), Popper (1935), and Feyerabend (1975) have all argued for a conception of scientific understanding that is not limited to a narrow conception of method, but views science more broadly as an art. Nevertheless, positivism as an ideology is especially prevalent among researchers in education and in the social sciences, including those who might disclaim any allegiance to positivism, and presents a persistent threat to the idea of practitioner inquiry. Among the most potent of positivist convictions is the belief in the exclusivity of the researcher—one consistent with the higher status of the researcher as knower over the practitioner as doer. For those who embrace this mindset, the idea of practitioner research is an oxymoron, and even if they are willing to admit that practitioners can inquire into their practice, they are inclined to view it as a very low level of inquiry that does not aim for the growth of knowledge but seeks, merely, to find out what works.

We believe that this is a false dichotomy that should be laid to rest once and for all. First, research, if it is to be understood as methodical inquiry, is not exclusively the work of academic researchers. We all inquire with varying degrees of skill and insight, and for a variety of purposes. Secondly, the idea of driving a wedge between researcher and practitioner, knower and doer is a distortion that ignores the roles of the researcher as a doer and the practitioner as a knower.

One of the arguments that seeks to support the exclusivity of the researcher as knower is the claim of methodological expertise—a claim that the activity of research can be understood exclusively in terms of methodological procedures. But this view of science as method has been refuted by recent philosophers of science. Thinkers like Kuhn (1962), Lakatos and Musgrave (1970), and Feyerabend (1975) have adopted a more historical and developmental approach to understanding the nature of science and have questioned the idea of science defined in terms purely of uniform procedures. “Successful research does not obey general standards; it relies now on one trick, now on another; the moves that advance it and standards that define what counts as an advance are not always known to the movers” (Feyerabend 1975, xix). If the idea of uniform procedures in scientific endeavors is suspect, then it would be even more suspect when approved methods in the physical sciences are taken to be authoritative in human studies, and yet again, even more so in understanding the nature of practical inquiry.

However, in spite of these criticisms, a sort of methodological fundamentalism or methodolatry is evoked in which the prestige of the researcher is upheld in virtue of their expertise purely as methodologists. Methodolatry may be understood as the view that the application of approved methods is the distinctive and defining attribute of research, and that the work of the researcher should be given purely in terms of the application of uniform procedures. So much for the role of conjecture, imagination, prior experience, situational knowledge, and other practical skills. Paul Feyerabend has attacked this view of uniform procedures arguing that we should understand science as an anarchic process rather than a rational, rule governed activity. Dewey (1934) also points to the importance of practical expertise in the capacity of the practitioner to formulate solutions to problems. Dewey invites us to reflect on the case of the physician, whose practice demands knowledge of established standards. “But,” he points out, “cases are *like*, not identical. To be used intelligently, existing practices, however authorized they may be, have to be adapted to the exigencies of particular cases... the physician’s own personal attitudes, his own ways (individual methods) of dealing with the situation in which he is concerned, are

not subordinated to the general principles of procedure, but are facilitated and directed by the latter” (171).

From the perspective of practitioners, then, the idea that their work is held to be dependent on the work of the theoretician— Schön’s “technical rationality”—ignores the important role of practitioners as problem solvers. Indeed, it is often the case that it is the scientist and theoretician who is dependent on the practitioner for insights into the workings of nature.

Are we to understand that practitioners must await the orders of researchers before they act? Jarvis (1999) reminds us that practitioners are often knowers long before researchers happen along. And Feyerabend (1975) similarly observes that “Chinese Technology for a long time lacked any Western scientific underpinning and yet it was far ahead of contemporary Western technology” (xxi). Dewey (1916) reminds us, too, that “the sciences grew gradually out from useful social occupations” (201). How are we, then, to understand how practical knowledge arises? Not just by trial and error, surely; but from systematic inquiry into practice.

These observations serve to remind us that science is often the handmaid of practitioners, seeking to justify and explain what is has already been established in practice for years. Experienced and sagacious scientists frequently seek out practitioners and their knowledge of practice in order to inform their studies. This would not be the case if practitioners were regarded as lacking knowledge.

Jarvis (1999) writes that practitioners must play two roles, that of researcher and practitioner; but his two-role position maintains the researcher/practitioner division. It also complicates the ethical dilemma posed at the beginning of this paper about preserving anonymity. The rules and duties of researcher and practitioner are set up so that they collide. The two-role approach also poses problems about rigor when standards of research practice are applied in different situations. Is it an error to apply standards of rigor in the field of, say, physics to human studies? Aristotle famously wrote in his *Ethics* that “it is a mark of an educated person to look in each area for only that degree of accuracy that the nature of the subject permits” (2000, 4).

Our approach is to argue for a more diverse conception of inquiry and of associated conceptions of rigor—an approach that is more cognizant of the particular nature of individual cases, of local knowledge, and of the importance of insider knowledge.

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## Artistry in Practice

In opposition to the technical rational model with its dualistic conception of research and practice, theorists like Donald Schön and Eliot Eisner have proposed a different approach that views the practitioner as an artist rather than a strict methodologist.

But what does it mean to compare the work of the teacher and other educational practitioners to that of the artist? One must take care not to set up a further dichotomy between practitioner and artist. We find that the same kind of dualistic thinking that separates research and practice applies in popular conceptions of art, and this viewpoint is supported by a number of influential writings in aesthetics. Collingwood (1958), for example, draws a strict line between art as a fine art and art as a craft. Dewey is critical of this approach. The target of Dewey's criticism of traditional aesthetics is what he refers to as the "museum conception" of art. This is the view of art that exalts the art object as something that possesses an almost magical or spiritual quality and venerates the artist as someone with special status—as the possessor of preternatural sensitivities and gifts of creative expression, someone for whom the normal rules do not apply. The problem with this view is that it places art outside of the range of normal human activities and creates a disconnection between art and common experience. Dewey's view, on the other hand, does not exaggerate the differences between art and practice, but emphasizes their similarities.

Central to Dewey's (1934) conception of art as it is experienced is the concept of *an* experience. Not all experience develops into *an* experience—only those experiences that "stand out from the flow of experience" and take on a personal, emotional, and intellectual significance and importance so that "each moment has significance in terms of the whole" (44). Dewey refers to two kinds of experience at this point: *an* intellectual experience (or experience of thinking) and a practical experience or experience of doing or making. Both thought and action may be said to involve aesthetic qualities in that they possess "a satisfying emotional quality because...of internal integration and fulfillment reached through ordered and organized movement" (45). That is, they possess artistic potential.

Of course a great deal of human activity is experienced at a level that never achieves artistic integration, even at the most basic level of what could be considered art. Dewey

refers to these as "non-aesthetic experiences." Actions are performed out of duty. They are banal or repetitive and carried out in a sort of mechanical and thoughtless way. "In much of our experience we are not concerned with the connection of one incident with what went before and what comes after" (46). "There is experience, but so slack and discursive that it is not *an* experience (47). Such experiences exist between two poles: loose discursive, humdrum experiences and constrained, mechanical, coerced experiences.

Certain preconditions are required if the work of practitioners is to be practiced as an art. First, there is a spirit of personal engagement in the work: "The ideal of interest is exemplified in the artistic attitude" (Dewey 1916, 142). Practitioners are almost by definition required to be interested in their work. They cannot adopt the dispassionate perspective required of the researcher.

The very word art may become associated not with specific transformations of things, making them more significant for mind, but with simulations of eccentric fancy and with emotional indulgences. The separation and mutual contempt for the 'practical' man and the man of theory or culture, the divorce of the fine and industrial arts, are indications of this situation. (Dewey 1916, 143)

Artistry requires a "full and free interest" in one's work. Fullness of interest refers to the intimacy of the insider viewpoint—the kind of detailed understanding that comes with familiarity of a particular situation or activity—the situational awareness of what is often referred to, disparagingly, as the "subjective point of view." Free interests introduce the conditions and nature of communities that enable artistry to flourish—non-restrictive social conditions that allow people to explore alternative viewpoints and encourage experimentation. When these preconditions apply, then, the work of the artist may proceed unimpeded.

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey refers to the initial requirement of artistic activity as "an impulsion" which suggests more than mere interest, but interest that serves as motivation to act. In addition, impulsion must encounter resistance. Adversity has the potential to convert experience into *an* experience. This, in outline, is the structure and form of every experience. This process of making things difficult, of challenging oneself and others, is essential if reflection is to be awakened and take us beyond the merely

mundane and routine. “Impulsion from need starts an experience that does not know where it is going; resistance and check bring about the conversion of direct forward action in re-flection; what is turned back upon is the relation of hindering conditions to what the self possesses as working capital in virtue of prior experiences” (Dewey 1934, 66). Artists are persons who seek out resistance and adversity, accepting new challenges, trying out things that are new, exploring new practices, and adapting old ones.

Thus, exploration or experimentation is characteristic of the artist. “There is,” Dewey writes, “a tendency among lay critics to confine experimentation to scientists in the laboratory. Yet one of the essential traits of the artist is that he (sic) is a born experimenter” (Dewey 1934, 148). Artistic experimentation is the process of trying things out. It is manifested in a spirit of adventure, in seeking to create new things and new ways of doing things. The process has similarities to Donald Schön’s (1983) conception of problem solving as “reflection in action.” Schön describes a situation in which teachers have “allowed themselves to become confused about subjects they are supposed to ‘know;’ and as they have tried to work their way out of their confusion, they have also begun to think differently about learning and teaching” (67). Here we have an instance of an impulsion that produces resistance and reflection in which the teacher “reflects on the phenomena before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behavior. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation” (68).

The idea of “allowing” oneself to become confused—to grasp at the problematic factors in a practice and empower oneself to experiment with options, raises some difficulties for the practitioner; especially when he or she operates in a strictly regulated community of practice. Many organizations and professional groups discourage innovation and exploration of the type demanded of the practitioner artist, limiting creativity and maintaining a rigid grip on the scope of individuals’ professional judgment. Novelty is equated with heterodoxy and, at worst, subjectivity.

Methodologists claim that “practitioner research” lacks objectivity, for how can practitioners possibly separate themselves from their interests. Interest is

equated with lack of objectivity. The idea that someone can be both practitioner and researcher, both insider and outsider, is tantamount to a contradiction. But the conception of the practitioner artists offers an alternative view that eschews the goal of an objective outsider in favor of a reflective, critical insider equipped with an insider’s understanding and situational awareness and furnished with a repertoire of prior experiences to seek solutions to practical problems.

Such a perspective, of course, raises questions about the “positionality” of the researcher and attempts to ameliorate these “biases” by means of “bracketing” aspects of the self so that a degree of objectivity is maintained.

### **Bias and Bracketing**

In most research endeavors, subjectivity is viewed with skepticism and is avoided as a contaminating factor. Even in qualitative research, where the researcher is deeply imbedded in the work, often as a participant as well as observer, there is a sense that researcher assumptions and bias need to be named and set aside. Bracketing, as the practice is generally known, is described in the literature as a means of demonstrating the validity of the data collection and analytic processes (Ahern 1999). In practice, it involves putting aside “repertoires of knowledge, beliefs, values and experiences in order to accurately describe participants’ life experiences” (Chan et al. 2013, 2). It is part of the “method” of “doing” qualitative research and helps to establish the rigor of the work. In many ways this seems like a noble task, but this practice raises several questions for us as it has for others in the past (see Humble and Cross 2010). Bias often lives deep below the surface and even the best researchers are oblivious to their own biases. The “tenacity of unconscious bias” (Gould 1996) makes it unlikely that it can be resurrected from the depths, exposed, and explored in a useful manner before the study commences. Rather, the revelation of bias is likely to dawn slowly over the duration of the study or even after it is completed. We agree with Ahern (1999), who acknowledges that bracketing is a long-term process that is “an iterative, reflexive journey that entails preparation, action, evaluation, and systematic feedback” (408). Constant reflection, reflexivity, and monitoring of emotions and

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perceptions can be valuable tools in the inquiry process and should be part of any inquiry process. At best, we can begin to tame our subjectivity by enhancing our awareness of it (Peshkin 1991).

### Process, Product, and the Myth of Replication

Another dualism that often arises in our discussion of inquiry or research is the process-product dichotomy. It is not unusual to speak of them as separate and distinct, the process leads to the product and if we want to replicate the product we can simply follow the same process and will likely come to the same conclusion. In this scenario, as we discussed earlier, following a particular method insures a valid outcome and the potential for replication is highly valued. But with practitioner inquiry the process and product are inseparable, intertwined, and mutually reflective. That is, the product is imbedded in the process and process is imbedded in the product. Replication is not possible because there are too many variables including the unique knowledge and skills of the practitioner and the practitioner's relationships with the context and with the multiple players involved. More precisely, it is the constellation of relationships built over time, within the distinctive ever-evolving context that are reflected in the process-product<sup>1</sup>. These cannot be replicated, nor should we want them to be, because ultimately it is both the uniqueness of the story that the practitioner tells—its elements of believability and resonance with the experience of his/her readers—that gives the work life. Resonance is more important than replication in practitioner inquiry and a careful, artful rendering of the process is valuable because it constitutes the product, not because it permits someone else to replicate it. In Dewey's terms, situations can be like, but not identical. Experience and what Dewey refers to as "plasticity"—our human capacity to take what we have learned in past situations and adapt them to novel ones—are preconditions of the growth of practical understanding.

All of our EdD cohort members were educational professionals. They entered the program with a list of accomplishments and a high level of expertise in their fields developed over time. They knew the stakeholders, had access to multiple sources of information, and were sensitive to the complexities of their organizations. It is precisely because of their unique set of skills, perspectives, and experiences that their studies are valuable to others in

the profession. Since they engaged their unique strengths to seek solutions to practical problems, it stands to reason that no one else could enter their situations with the same degree of authority to tell the story or have the same degree of access to documents and people. Their credibility as central players within the organization helped to lend credibility to their study. Koch and Harrington (1998), practitioners in the field of health, identify "believability and plausibility" as goals for interpretive research and as measures of rigor. Because practitioners are deeply embedded in their social context, they understand the complexity of the unique setting and have the insight to tell a story that is believable and plausible and that has resonance for other professionals.

In conclusion, it is in virtue of the practitioner inquirer's capacity for resonance and plasticity, for their ability to adapt past knowledge to new conditions, to modify methods to fit novel situations, and to be willing to try things out experimentally that we refer to them as artists.

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- <sup>1</sup> This hyphenated term was inspired by Freire (2000) who used the terms "student-teacher" and "teacher-student" to overcome the duality of teacher and student. His terms point to the inseparability and interdependence of teacher and student and the sense that they are mutually informing.

# Affirming the Artist Practitioner Researcher

*Rebecca Kapolei Kiili*

My introduction to the field of qualitative research in the EdD program began with analyzing the artistry of a practitioner researcher. If “the aim of the researcher is to discover or reveal truths about the world” (McEwan and Reed 2017), then one must acknowledge that truth and the knowledge of truth lives in consciousness. Individually, as we become conscious through our uniquely lived human experiences, it is the dualistic nature of those experiences that encapsulate and enrich our intellect, our ethos, and our morality. “We all inquire with varying degrees of skill and insight, and for a variety of purposes” (McEwan and Reed 2017). In discussing “the problem of the researcher/practitioner dichotomy,” I agree that the separation is indeed a false one. Our lives are filled with challenges, adversities, resistance, and problems at micro and macro levels. Just as we cannot know love without pain, we cannot know joy without sorrow, nor happiness without sadness. Similarly, a researcher cannot know without first doing because her knowledge is gained through all of her experiences. The human experience is fluid, complex, and unique for every person, so too is the experience and artistry of the practitioner researcher.

Arriving in the space of an emerging artist practitioner researcher has been soulfully synchronistic and life affirming because of the magic I have experienced in the convergence and alignment of all parts of myself; the conscious self, the knowing self, the intuitive self, and the doing self. The manifestation of the deep desire to feel connected and whole was an experience worth waiting for and worth working through in order to have evolved into the next level of self. That next level of the whole self has been all encompassing and completely accepting of my life experiences, cultural conditioning, labels, stereotypes, similarities, and differences that I have been enculturated in. I am filled with amazement as I reflect on how my life experiences have led me to this exact space and time. It has been tremendously transformative in such a short amount of time.

I feel the alignment of both my personal and professional positionalities and see this integration as the most significant first step in developing the artist

practitioner researcher in me. Without this wholeness, the learner and leader in me would be incomplete, fragmented, and unprepared for the undertaking of the philosophy that drives the field of qualitative research. One of the most central key components to qualitative research is “that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam 2009, 15). Accepting this notion that the researcher is at the forefront of her research design, the convergence of my varied identities and positionalities inclusive of my ontology, epistemology, and axiology have allowed me to practice reflexivity, “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher,” (Merriam 2009, 219).

McEwan and Reed (2017), bring to life the artistry of the practitioner researcher, encouraging the inclusiveness of the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of our human experiences. Whereas the traditional researcher’s work separates the knower from the doer and the doer from the knower, the artist practitioner researcher approach does not seek to unbias the biases, exclude the researcher’s perspectives and values, nor deny the fullness of the experience in solving problems of practice. Instead, the practitioner researcher is encouraged to be open about one’s positionalities. “Even in journal articles authors are being called upon to articulate and clarify their assumptions, experiences, and worldview, and theoretical orientation” (Merriam 2009).

The emic and etic experiences of a practitioner researcher gives depth to the researcher’s experiences allowing her to internalize her own experience thereby changing her in the process. We can never be the same person we were in our youth, or even yesterday. The process of artistry in practitioner research reflects natural human development and evolution. We learn, grow, develop, and refine ourselves through our adversities, challenges, resistance, and problems. McEwan and Reed (2017) remind me that, “Artists are persons who seek out resistance and adversity, accepting new challenges, and trying out things that are new, exploring new practices, and adapting old ones (46).”

After reflecting then synthesizing this new understanding, I began to see positionality as a foundation, a process, and a framework for developing the artist practitioner researcher in me. As a Native Hawaiian female born and raised in a Native Hawaiian family in Hawai'i, the strength of the foundation and core of who I am is grounded in this identification of being Native Hawaiian. My physical attributes, my dispositions, and my overall value system are innately and closely aligned to being Native Hawaiian.

Positionality as a process has challenged me to understand that the labels, stereotypes, and perceptions that others may have about Native Hawaiians exist in real and relevant ways; especially in politics. And that owning these labels, stereotypes, and perceptions does not have to diminish my own self-worth and value as a human being, but can serve as a means to continue developing the learner and leader in me. The process of working with other cohort members has reminded me to be aware of how others perceive me. I have come to value positionality as a framework for enhancing the practitioner researcher identity to transform into a refined version of my whole self in order to be ready for a higher caliber of leadership roles and responsibilities in my community. Although I believe my positionality can also be an advantage in the research I hope to undertake, I do recognize the uniqueness of who I am and who I am not.

The concepts of positionality and reflexivity have been the essence and epiphany of my transformation this summer. I now see myself holistically as an artist practitioner researcher who can exercise and utilize intellect, philosophy, justice, peace, passion, creativity, compassion, and courage to affect change and, most importantly, growth in my life and my work. Change begins within, therefore being reflective as an artist practitioner researcher is truly significant to one's work, for without it, we become preachers who share powerful ideas, but never internalize them enough to model, live, or abide by those same concepts. To know by doing and to understand by integrating new knowledge exemplifies and gives life to the notion of "practice to theory."

An artist practitioner researcher possesses a combination of self-awareness and political awareness. My personal commitment for strengthening my self-awareness began at the age of thirty. I made the conscious decision to work

towards healing the deep wounds I endured because of the adversities in my younger life. In these past seven years on this journey towards healing my own micro-ethical dilemmas and entanglements, two major concepts have impacted my growth. The first is owning responsibility for my life and my life's purpose. This has helped me to take back my power and move into what Lipe (2016) quotes from Vizenor (2008) as "survivance, . . . a state of being in which we, as Indigenous peoples, reject being the victim (1)." The second is actually based on the book *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz (2012). Using the indigenous knowledge of the Toltec, the four agreements teach us to "1) be impeccable with your word, 2) don't take anything personally, 3) don't make assumptions, and 4) always do your best." This "practical guide to personal freedom" has helped me to develop self-awareness in the context of my family, my community, and my work. I use this guide as a framework for the way I live and lead.

My early childhood life experiences have significantly impacted my overall development and dispositions. Learning the six key characteristics of a researcher confirmed that perhaps I chose this particular life path filled with the many adversities and harsh challenges as a means to prepare me to become an artist practitioner researcher. The six traits of a researcher: being a careful observer; comfort with writing; having a questioning stance with your work and life context; thinking inductively; asking good questions; and having a high tolerance for ambiguity poignantly describe the skills I developed as a result of my dysfunctional childhood. The troubles that plagued my Native Hawaiian family were perhaps commonplace considering the generational genocide of my Native Hawaiian ancestors and our beloved Hawaiian nation hundreds of years ago. Each subsequent generation worked to live their lives in the best ways they knew how under the complex circumstances of our political history in our homelands. I do not harbor resentment towards my parents for their shortcomings. Instead, I honor them with the utmost compassion because they lived within their capacities and gifted me with a strong foundation of values, most especially the value of collective consciousness.

My parents' prerogative was far from political. I did not grow up understanding the depth of colonization nor its impact upon me personally prior to this summer.

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The dimensions of my identity deepened and shifted drastically as I began to internalize this new knowledge. The topic contextualized my lived experiences as a Native Hawaiian and stimulated a very pertinent part of my emerging artist practitioner researcher identity: political awareness. This motivates me in even greater ways to enter into the field of qualitative research. I now see my role as an artist practitioner researcher for the benefit of my community as we reimagine our lives in this postcolonial period, adding our voices and perspective to tell our stories. This is the reason that I believe that arriving in this space as an emerging practitioner researcher now is significant and symbolic for me. I am content in accepting that the path to this space and time could not have occurred any sooner in my life. We are always where we are supposed to be. Without the commitment in my journey of spiritual maturation, the readiness to deepen my political awareness might not have been as powerful.

Thus far, my understanding in the artistry of the practitioner researcher has been conceptualized in this notion: we are capable of solving our own problems of practice as practitioner researchers. The problems we face in our practice become the impetus in the desire to effectuate change. I believe that it is innately human to want to make sense of our lives. “Basically, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world,” (Merriam 2009, 13). Therefore, as we aim to solve these problems of practice, the artistry of our work is transmitted through our ethos and embedded in our positionalities. We become the catalyst for change and change ourselves in the process thereby transforming the space and caliber of our educational environments.

The social learning environment in the cohort experience of this EdD program has also been vital to my transformation as an emerging artist practitioner researcher. Our presence and the stories that we each brought to the space was synergistic. In a serene and serendipitous manner, we began to create a ‘spirit of transformation’ (Twomey 2017). In these next three years, combining our intellectual abilities and our intrapersonal and interpersonal skills has the potential to refine the artist practitioner-researcher in each and every one of us. Proverbs 27:17 from the New International Holy Bible proclaims “as iron sharpens

iron, so one man sharpens another” (1986, 857). We have definitely begun sharpening each other by bringing our whole and authentic selves to the space. And for the sincerity, generosity, and genuineness of each of my fellow cohort members, I am eternally grateful. Through our diverse backgrounds and the high demands of each and every one of our lives, we have committed to aspire to our highest leadership potential because of our profound passions in seeking truth, justice, and equality. May our love for our shared homeland of Hawai‘i always be at the heart of our future work.

Lastly, I feel that the approach to being an artist practitioner researcher will nurture leadership through a different lens and place accountability upon the researcher in a way that does not seek outside of one’s self for answers, but honors one’s own wisdom and enriches the creative power that we each possess in order to address some of the issues and challenges we encounter. This approach validates the knowledge that we all inherently retain and our capability in solving our problems, fulfilling our own needs, and becoming that which we seek in leadership. The artistry of qualitative research is best expressed in Cremer’s (2017) statement, “the magic of this space is that it reaffirms what you already know.” I feel privileged to have experienced the magic of the EdD program in this first summer of course work and for the deep ways I have already transformed. It is indeed a benevolent experience to enter a space that “allows people to unleash their power” (Lipe 2017). I am affirmed.

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# Cleaving to Artistry: A Path in Practitioner Research

*Alvin Lin*

## Resistance to Artistry

I begin this paper by admitting that I have never really liked art. I did not like it when I was a preschooler tearing up construction paper to create a mosaic of a clover, I did not like it when I was a middle schooler at the Honolulu Academy of Arts painting a still life portrait of a vase blushing with flowers, I did not like it when I participated in interpretive theatre as a freshman in high school, and there is a part of me that still does not like it very much even today. This is a curious phenomenon, because as much as I profess to disliking art, I have been drawn to it time after time on many occasions throughout my life. In high school, I could not help but to consume the works of celebrated poets and writers. I used to write short prosaic pieces in a journal that I have long since abandoned. I even signed up for several art history courses while I was studying abroad in Paris in college. I still remember how often I would return to *le Musée du Louvre* to explore different artifact, pictures, and sculptures. I would muse about the stories behind the pieces and expressive works that I could connect to, for no particular reason other than that they struck an emotional chord within my cognitive instrument.

So when I read that our first reading for the EdD program was one about artistry and the practitioner researcher, I began to wonder to myself if there was some significance to this particular pattern in my life. This very paper seems to be an autoethnographic exploration of the topic of artistry in my work as an educator and what it means to be that artist given my own history with the concept of art as a strained one. Since the first day of this program, every assignment washed through my life like a wall of a water overrunning an unsuspecting city. The assignments have turned many carefully constructed ideas upside down and caused many buried issues and unsettling emotions to flood to the surface. The grand challenge has been to examine the

aftermath of this turbulence, and reconstructing a deeper understanding of these internal struggles now that they have resurfaced. The search for authenticity seems to be a persistent tale of severing and rejoining, and I find myself again in the second stage of this cyclical process.

I wonder about the deeper implications of my initial resistance to art. I wonder if it is because I equate art to a form of expression, one that necessarily involves extracting elements of the self and, through some form of alchemy, producing a public display of what was once a private matter. I am not so sure that it is the production of art that troubles me as much as it is the digging. In his memoirs, Carl Jung mentions that, “Whenever there is a reaching down into innermost experience, into the nucleus of the personality, most people are overcome by fright, and many run away” (Jung 1989, 141). I am starting to consider that I have been simply running for many years from the exploration of my own self. In my paper *Mo’oku’auhau Reflection #2* (Lin 2017), I described in greater detail the extent to which I felt like I was experiencing my world through a thick glass rather than as an active participant. It was like staring at the glaciers through the windows of a cruise boat and not being able to feel the awakening frosty air. It may be that this is a consequence of trying to escape from the stories of my identity rather than embracing and taking artistic ownership over them.

## Art, Paradox, and Leadership

In his memoirs, Carl Jung (1989) makes the case for the importance of continuous personal development, particularly along interspaces between spirituality and personal mythologies. “I have frequently seen people become neurotic when they content themselves with inadequate or wrong answers to the questions of life. [...] Such people are usually confined within too narrow a spiritual horizon” (Jung 1989, 140). In working through all

of the reflective assignments, I have grown to appreciate how much this course has challenged me to see how deeply our professional, personal, and research identities co-exist and also co-evolve. It seems clearer and clearer to me throughout each day of our course that qualitative research seems hopelessly intertwined with the elements of spirituality, emotion, and aesthetics. Research, I am discovering, is in a sense a crafted story or interpretation that is difficult to separate from the identity of researcher. In fact, we lose much of its richness by requiring such a separation. As I challenge myself to learn not just about research, but equally as much about the main participant in activity—my own identities and selves which I have been largely ignoring—I find that in order to grow into a more effective researcher I must also grow in my personal capacities as well, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually. This has prompted me to do quite a bit of deep work on developing and establishing my identity as an educator, a leader, a scholar, and a non-indigenous person living in Hawai‘i. While this work is nowhere near done, and heeding Jung’s words that this work should never quite conclude, I must admit that I feel no less “neurotic” and unstable at this time.

It appears to me that art is the continuous pursuit in the resolution of paradox. The most striking paradox is one of self-discovery—or perhaps *self-recovery*—that in order to become more whole and begin to reintegrate parts of our fragmented selves, we must first dissociate from the parts of ourselves we thought we knew best, perhaps to get a better perspective from a different angle. In the book *The Alchemist*, the protagonist Santiago journeys across the continent in search of treasure only to discover that what he was looking for was the abandoned church where his journey first began (Coelho 1998). This tale seems to suggest a timeless tale of severing and rejoining, of fractalization and reintegration, which ultimately leads to experiential wisdom. What seems to be a classic allegory about the hero’s journey serves also as a metaphor for how art can bring kaleidoscopic fragments of experiences full circle into a coherent web of integrated significance. The resolution of paradox through art embodies the birth of revelation. Meaning is conceived through the union of art and paradox, paradox as the rich womb of complexity and art as the instrumental catalyst for the development of interpretation. Art is making the invisible visible, it is the deliberate practice of peeling

away and unmasking subtle significance within complexity, it is the intentional sculpting and casting of a stone in pursuit of the statue within, it is the amplification of the gentle voice of truth that lives within the blank canvas. Art is the alchemical union between the internal instruments of the artist and external landscape of complexities of reality.

With this suggestive allegory and provocative theory in mind, I too begin my own journey of coming full circle in attempting to reconcile my paradoxical tensions with artistry. When I think about everything that I do and have done, it is all driven by beauty and artistry. I realized that I studied chemistry as an undergraduate because I found tremendous beauty in the deduction of empirical data into crystallized principles of how matter and energy behaved. I saw a spiritual aspect to this disciplined practice of divining of hidden principles that was deeply embedded in carefully collected data and how these principles had tremendous predictive prowess and were instrumental in deepening our understanding of our physical reality. I now see that qualitative research is not so different, except that a) the subject of study is no longer physical phenomena but more anthropological and personal, and b) essential understandings or meaning is not merely to be extracted, but that they are constructed rather than discovered. “Meaning does not inhere in the object, merely waiting for someone to come upon it. [...] Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty 1998, as cited in Merriam 2016, 24). It dawns upon me now that when I failed to continue my PhD in chemistry, my disenchantment was due at least in part to the lack of a sense of personal and academic artistry during my experience at the university. At first thought, I would say that I lost sight of the artistry in my subject of study, but upon deeper retrospection, I realize that I had lost sight of the artist within me, and perhaps even consciously renounced it.

I have never accepted the identity of an artist before, but that may be because I held so strongly to a myopic definition of the term. don Miguel Ruiz (2017) says that “[...] on this beautiful Planet Earth there are seven billion artists. They may not know that they are artists, but every single person creates a masterpiece of art which is the story of their life. They create the main characters of their story, they create many secondary characters, and they create all the rules in that story” (161). At the conclusion of the EdD 2017 summer program, I find that it behooves me to gather

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a bit of courage and own up to the fact that there is artistry in the way we make sense of our world, in how we interpret the information we receive and what we choose to make of it through our actions and our understanding. I don't know if I quite understand it yet, but scholarship as a practitioner researcher and educational leader seems inseparably bound to a deeper quest for authenticity.

### **Research Practitioner**

It is a Friday morning and I am preparing to deliver a professional development on science education to a group of academic coaches within our school complex area in the Central school district of Hawai'i. In this moment, I start to wonder about the impact that my own learning has had on my professional practices. I wonder about whether the things I have learned have truly made a difference, whether I have become a more disciplined researcher, whether a summer boot camp in qualitative research methods have suddenly equipped me with the knowledge and skills to begin the apprenticeship to research methodologies of phenomenology, ethnography, case studies, narrative analysis, and grounded theory. While I feel it is much too early to tell since I have not yet even begun my work as a researcher, a few critical shifts in the way that I now think about my work have become much more apparent to me after these summer courses.

### **Barriers**

The first shift in my mindset is a new appreciation and sensitivity to barriers, that is, obstacles that stand in the way of a dream and impede the realization of a vision. I have started to pay more attention to the idea that all barriers exist for a reason, and often they exist for the very purpose of protecting something valuable and close to the hearts of the people who are closest to the issue. I know that I am sometimes inclined to equate leadership with vision and execution, but I sense that this will only lead down a path where I one day question the uni-dimensionality of my work. If we forsake emotions, spirituality, and artistry in our professional work, what will result from this compartmentalization of these aspects of our humanity and would the results be truly worth the cost? I wonder if this fractalization of the self has truly allowed us to serve our people and our communities as agents of change and social justice, or do we unconsciously aid hegemonic agendas that are already in motion. Are we the artists in the work that

we do, or are we the tools in someone else's masterpiece? Artistry is consciousness and reflexivity, and reflexivity is at times a non-attachment to our beliefs. It is one thing to use our beliefs as an instrument, and another thing to become an instrument to our beliefs, and we must be very cautious of our natural tendency for the latter.

### **Constructivism & Emotions**

I now realize that even by writing out this reflection, I am in some ways constructing, in some ways altering, and in some ways erasing aspects of my lived experience in the service of drawing out significance and meaning that may potentially have greater personal as well as academic capital. This is the power of the artist within me, and within all people. Through the lens of critical theory, it is said that all interpretation is political (Merriam 2016, 10). This is a very sobering thought, but also a very stimulating one, because it calls upon us to recognize our influence and impact within education and also to recognize our responsibility to be conscious of and fight systemic injustices. Dr. Kaiwipuni Lipe asks us as leaders to "pay attention to feelings. Feelings can drive us forward, or they can drive us away. We must take the time understand them" (personal communication [lecture notes], July 14, 2017). Given the role that emotions can play in our academic identities and leadership, I have started to note particular reactions, emotions, and reflections in my journal as I observe my external and internal environments in my work and studies. As a practitioner researcher artist, emotions are tools for critical consciousness, social justice, and academic scholarship. As fuel for our ideas and momentum for change, they deserve our disciplined attention and reflection.

### **Awareness, Appreciation, & Ethnography**

I have come to understand that as a researcher, I must start practicing a particular type of awareness, monitoring my impressions and perceptions and attuning them to the nuanced art of seeing the invisible in the visible, the remarkable in the unremarkable (Silverman 2007). At the end of my day, when I seem to have sufficient energy and space to engage in reflection as a researcher, I wonder about the interactions that I have had during the day, the things people have said, the ideas shared, the emotions that arose, and the physical settings where everything occurred. Informally, I begin to grasp at the hints of patterns that begin to emerge and what they might mean, how they

might be able to help us better understand our role and place, and how we can use that understanding to improve our work and better serve our people. I think there is a value in mining our impressions for starting points in research, especially if we are new to our profession as I currently am in my new position. For now, as I prepare to embark on the next leg of my journey, I have made a conscious commitment to honing my skills in observation and reflection, examining my surrounding and internal states with the sensitivity of an artist, the discipline of a researcher, and the wisdom of a practitioner. I am confident that what lies within the overlaps of these three spheres is a work of art, research, and service that is truly worth constructing.

In this paper, I have discussed how my struggle for an identity as an artist in research has led to personal insights about who I am and how I have evolved as a practitioner researcher. I suggest that personal meaning is generated through the process of resolving particular paradoxes that appear as conflicts, and that the resolution requires a form of artistry that utilizes attention to emotions, reflexivity, and consciousness as we better make sense of the complex aspects of our situation with the goal of better serving our people and our communities through education.

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# Thoughts on Designing Research to be Pono

*Makalapua Alencastre*

As a Native Hawaiian, I am steadfast in my efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language and culture as I embrace the “Hawaiian immersion lifestyle” as an educator, a mother, and Tūtūmā to my 14 grandchildren. At this late point in my career—I’ve been a teacher and administrator for over four decades—I especially valued the learning opportunities and experiences of being a member of the pioneer cohort of the EdD program. The 28 cohort members were from diverse backgrounds and contributed incredible amounts of community and educational expertise. Combined with the dedicated visionaries who served as doctoral faculty and mentors, we truly represented Hawai‘i’s multicultural community and educational landscapes. The diversity amongst us added many layers of depth to our inquiries and reflections and ultimately elevated our development as servant leaders.

I consider my journey within the EdD program as transformative; I arrived as an educator and progressed to become a practitioner researcher. Honing the praxis of educational leadership through the rigors of program coursework provided the sustenance needed to complete the two required capstone projects. The group consultancy projects provided a pragmatic means to collaboratively address real issues by contributing research to benefit educational initiatives throughout Hawai‘i. The dissertation in practice (DiP) required research focused on problems of practice relevant to our respective fields.

Immersed as a practitioner researcher in both the group consultancy project (Akiu-Wilcox, Alencastre, Hattori, Lucas, and Seto 2012) and DiP (Alencastre 2015), I found invaluable opportunities to engage in authentic applied research focused on P–12 Hawaiian language medium-immersion education and the preparation of its teachers. Coming to terms with the scope of work to address problems of practice was a lengthy but essential process negotiated with multiple members of the respective communities. Considering the specific contexts of these projects as Hawaiian language educational programs, it was apparent that traditional research paradigms would

not suffice. Principles of indigeneity promoted within Indigenous research resonated well with contemporary Hawaiian education initiatives and provided the foundation for developing appropriate research frameworks for both projects. I was inspired by several Indigenous research concepts that expressly elevated cultural knowledge and values as the basis of its methodology, namely

- ❖ characterizing the epistemological framework of Indigenous research by “bringing to the centre and privileging indigenous values, attitudes and practices” (Smith 2012);
- ❖ considering qualitative research approaches as an “inclusive place” that provides room for Indigenous research (Kovach 2009); and
- ❖ honoring oral traditions by
  - validating oral interviewing strategies as a means to empower both the individual and collective voices and experiences of participants (Brayboy 2005); and
  - building personal relationships through an understanding of the culture to promote “respectful, reciprocating interaction” (Vaioleti 2006).

The focus of my DiP was to contribute to the knowledge base of maui ola Hawai‘i (Hawaiian cultural identity) education by exploring the efficacy of teacher preparation for Hawaiian language medium-immersion education. One of the major breakthroughs experienced within the DiP process was designing my research to be pono<sup>1</sup> by developing it on a foundation of cultural norms, values, and practices. This was achieved by relying on ‘ike kupuna, on traditional wisdom and values as the essential core of the study, which directly informed and enriched its intent, process, and outcomes. Aspiring to permeate pono throughout the design and implementation of the study enabled the methodology to authentically reflect the distinct characteristics of maui ola Hawai‘i education. Another essential facet of designing pono research was to be mindful of the practitioner researcher’s kuleana—the responsibility to

ensure that the research would be purposeful and beneficial beyond its academic value.

As such, I set about designing my study to critically explore issues and challenges, document and analyze distinctive practices, and affirm achievements within the context of preparing Hawaiian language medium-immersion teachers. The study was designed as a values-driven and culturally-appropriate framework with Hawaiian concepts, protocols, tools, and behaviors intentionally incorporated and adhered to throughout the study. For example, the use of traditional Hawaiian metaphors and similes evoked imagery framing the study and making essential connections among the various research phases. The use of metaphorical language is considered to be an authentic and desirable way of conveying understandings and expressions in Hawaiian that go beyond conventional conversation. “Since the sayings carry the immediacy of the spoken word, considered to be the highest form of cultural expression in old Hawai‘i, they bring us closer to the everyday thoughts and lives of the Hawaiian who created them” (Pukui 1983, vii).

Portraying each of the chapters through descriptive prose associated with the sun’s ascent integrated Hawaiian thoughts and inspiration into the study, calling upon the sun’s life-giving energies to provide growth, health, and well-being. *Ka lā i ka Mauiola* (Pukui 1983, 154), a traditional Hawaiian metaphor that initiated the imagery of four of the sun’s phases, framed the study and reflected its progress from inception to completion. Within the various chapters, the essence of each of the sun’s phases, from *wana‘ao* as its dawning until *kau ka lā i ka lolo* as its moments directly overhead, infused the well-being of this study with essential intentions, processes, and outcomes. Additionally, *‘ōlelo no‘eau* (traditional wise sayings) were elicited from program graduates as reflections of their preservice experiences. Incorporating these types of image-making techniques provided an important cultural lens and grounding to the study.

The research design centered *Ke Kumu Honua Maui Ola* (KHMO) Hawaiian educational philosophy (2009) at its core. This philosophy articulates the richness and depth of *maui ola Hawai‘i* as epistemological frameworks and ontological values inherent within a traditional Hawaiian worldview. Cultivating *maui ola Hawai‘i* became a definitive goal of the study by integrating *pili ‘uhane* (spirituality), *‘ike ku‘una* (traditional knowledge), *‘ōlelo* (language), and *lawena* (behaviors) as essential cultural elements throughout

the study. A prominent feature of this study was the predominant use of the Hawaiian language throughout all research activities, including developing the tools, engaging with participants, and presenting and analyzing the data sets. Maintaining Hawaiian as the primary language of interaction with participants was critical in supporting previously established language relationships between myself as researcher and the participants. Equally important was the opportunity to promote the status of the Hawaiian language as a viable medium within academic pursuits.

As a means to visualize and internalize the overall research process, an essential step taken was to connect myself into the study by making its design familiar and meaningful. Insights into an appropriate research approach eventually came to me while in the native forest gathering ferns and flowers for lei that would adorn my four-year-old *mo‘opuna* (granddaughter) and her *Pūnana Leo* classmates at a Hawaiian language festival. Although I have made hundreds of lei throughout my life—in my youth as a hula dancer and to bedeck loved ones during life’s many celebrations—being in the forest that day clarified a design that refined my study. Figure 1 illustrates the lei-making metaphor.

Lei-making is an art that is rewarding on spiritual, physical, and emotional levels and is a cultural practice that I thoroughly enjoy. I applied my knowledge of the intricacies

### Kumu Honua Maui Ola

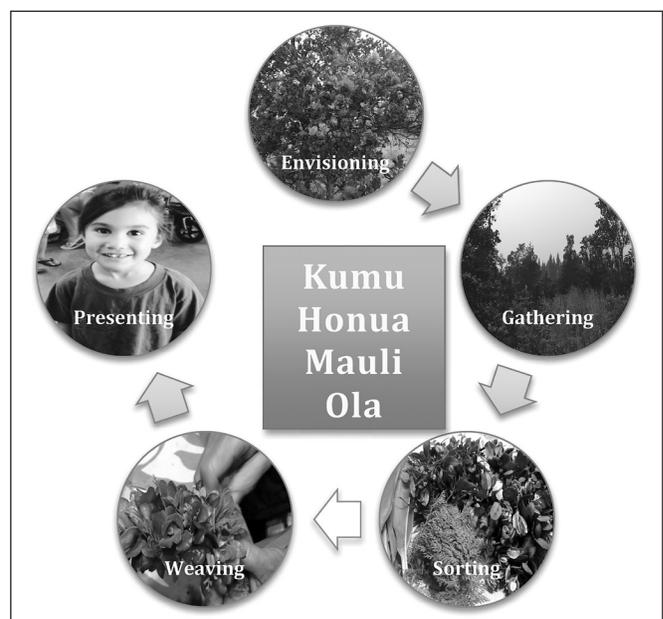


Figure 1. Lei-Making Metaphor

of lei-making to conceptualize and operationalize a values-driven, culturally-appropriate research framework—one that intuitively made sense to me. Envisioning the recipient and occasion determines the appropriate type of lei. In considering lei styles that would appropriately illustrate the intended metaphor, the lei haku as a traditional style of weaving together a variety of flowers and foliage was selected. Intimate familiarity with places and processes allows respectful access to connect with the natural environment. As many of the plants used for lei haku flourish in the native upland forests, requesting permission is an essential protocol conducted prior to entering the forest and opens the way for safe and productive gathering. The choicest flowers and foliage are sought out and gathered from different areas—until lawa—there’s just enough. While departing, words of appreciation are offered. Taking stock of all that was gathered, each piece is carefully considered for obvious and subtle distinctions. Individual pieces of foliage are meticulously tended to, sorted, and pruned to prepare for their selection and placement in the lei-weaving process. Relying on both intuition and creativity, the weaving firmly yet gently secures each item together. As the weaving progresses and individual elements are connected, an intricate pattern of colors and textures is created. To assure that each piece has been appropriately placed and securely fastened, it is picked up and gently shaken. A final reflection of the lei includes a discerning visual inspection to affirm its qualities and to enjoy its unique beauty. As a labor of love, once the lei is complete, it is presented to encircle its wearer with aloha.

The analogy of Hawaiian lei-making was instrumental in connecting to the intentionality and complexities that emerged within each phase of the study. Incorporating the lei metaphor into the research design ultimately informed the cohesive development and flow of my study as its processes guided the data collection, analysis, and reporting. As practitioner researcher, having a clear sense of purpose elucidates the intent to clarify the type of study that would be meaningful and beneficial. My capacity to access and gather Hawaiian educators’ experiences throughout various educational communities was made possible by relationships that were created through decades of personal and professional involvement in Hawaiian language education. Respectful of those relationships, I humbly requested individuals to participate in this study. The wisdom, experiences, and perspectives of elders,

mentors, teachers, and students was sought out; their stories were data giving voice to this community. Experiences and expertise were shared through a survey, as well as through focus groups and interviews that honored oral traditions via culturally-grounded interactions. Each activity was opened and closed with pule (prayer) to guide and enrich the process. I was cognizant of listening deeply to both individual and collective voices. Reflecting on the essence of the experiences and perspectives shared, ideas were woven together as unique and resonating themes emerged. As with the lei, it was with sincere aloha that this study was conducted and presented to further enhance Hawaiian language educational efforts. Overall, reflecting on and extending the intricacies of lei-making as a valued custom contributed to the maui ola of this study, to its well-being and success.

In conjunction with the creation of Hawaiian language educational programs aimed at renormalizing the use of the Hawaiian language and culture, it behooves us to articulate the means to appropriately conduct research that will contribute new understandings and insights to this emerging field of education. Designing research to be pono has been described as emanating from a foundation of cultural values and knowledge that authentically reflects specific contexts. As such, engaging in scholarship that asserts an Indigenous presence and worldview will continue to expand and deepen existing research paradigms.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Pono is a concept which has numerous meanings and is used here to indicate a process done in an appropriate manner. Additional meanings include good, upright, moral, correct or proper procedure, excellent, well-being, prosperity, welfare, benefit, behalf, equity, sake, true condition.